Learning from home during COVID-19: primary school parents' perceptions of their school's management of the home-learning situation

Tracey Muir, Bethany Muir, David Hicks, Kim Beasy & Carol Murphy

Published online: 02 Feb 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

Article views: 1055

View related articles ↗

View Crossmark data ↗

co⁕gent

CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE   ᓂ OPEN ACCESS   Check for updates

Learning from home during COVID-19: primary school parents' perceptions of their school's management of the home-learning situation

Tracey Muir[a], Bethany Muir[b], David Hicks[c], Kim Beasy[c] and Carol Murphy[c]

[a]Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia; [b]Australian National University, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia; [c]University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in interruptions to social, economic, cultural, and educational life, with social distancing measures and well-being concerns leading to widespread restrictions to everyday activities. When COVID-19 first made an impact in 2020, many schools across Australia were closed entirely or provided limited access. Subsequently, many parents and caregivers were tasked with educating their children from home. Throughout this period, a key concern identified by various stakeholders was the potential impact of school closures on academic progression. This paper reports the results of a study that investigated Australian primary school parents' experiences of home-learning with their children due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020. To explore perceptions of how home-learning was managed by schools and the impact the experience had on children's academic progress from the perspective of parents, survey data were collected ($n = 171$) and interviews were conducted ($n = 29$). The study was guided by Epstein's Framework of Parental Involvement, with a particular focus on home-school partnerships. Findings indicated that, despite individual challenges, many parents were willing to engage in home-learning with their children, often beyond what was expected of them by the school. Overall, parents felt that the impact on academic progress was minimal, and that positive experiences were characterised by strong home-school connections. Through building on Epstein's work to reconceptualise parental engagement with learning, rather than parental involvement with school, the study is important because it highlights assumptions made about parents' pedagogical and content knowledge and their capacity to support school directed student learning. Importantly the findings demonstrate how home-school partnerships can be strengthened or put at risk under challenging conditions.

In March 2020, government responses to the global pandemic of COVID-19 led to 87% of students around the world being affected by school closures (United Nations Educational & Scientific & Cultural Organisation, 2020). In Australia, disruptions occurred in every state and territory, although the extent and length of school closures differed. As a result, many schools provided distance education, often using digital technology to communicate, requiring students, teachers, and parents to quickly adjust to a new mode of learning and teaching (Sacks et al., 2020). With the shift of learning from school to home, many parents (in this context, the term 'parents' encompasses caregivers) found themselves taking on new or more involved roles in their child's learning than ever before. Equally, schools were challenged to adapt a system of education, originally built around physical schools, to shift online. As such, concerns have been raised about the impact these school closures may have had on students in falling behind academically and being isolated socially (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020).

    The experiences from COVID-19 allowed a unique opportunity for researchers to consider what benefits and challenges were experienced during the home-learning period, and how we can use this

---

information in the future to support learning, and to inform schools, with potential to rethink educational experiences and relationships between parents and schools (Wrigley, 2020). Some would argue that the disruption to schooling was not necessarily a bad thing (see Seale, 2020), and provided opportunities (Richmond et al., 2020) to develop home-school connections, previously associated with child educational success (Epstein, 2009). The researchers were motivated to undertake the study as they were interested in how the unique situation provided opportunities for increased collaboration between school and home where accessibility to the physical site of the school was removed. They were also interested in documenting how parents adapted their routines and their perceptions of how they were resourced to support their child/ren's learning. With this in mind, this paper reports on an investigation of Australian parents' perceptions of their experiences of learning at home with their children, how their child's school managed the home-learning situation (e.g. the school's provision and format of learning materials; expectations of parental roles; efficiency of remote classrooms), and their perceived impact that the period of home-learning had on their children's academic progress. The study aimed to gain insights into how Australian parents of primary aged children supported their child's learning at home during the initial lock-down period, and to specifically address the following research questions:

- How did primary school parents experience their school's management of learning at home as a result of COVID-19 restrictions?
- In what ways did the school's management impact the connection between the child's home and school?
- What were primary school parents' perceptions of the impact of home-learning on the academic progress of their children?

We know that 'positive family engagement can and does significantly influence student academic attainment' (Emerson et al., 2012, p. 8) and that benefits of home-school connections include gains in student achievement, higher levels of student participation, a greater sense of personal competency and efficacy for learning (Victorian Department of Education, 2023). Factors that influence this engagement include opportunities for learning, communication, and seeing parents as partners in their child's learning (Goodall, 2022). These factors were addressed in the study through the questions asked of participants in surveys and interviews. Alongside an understanding of the influence of home-school connections on parents' perceptions of whether their child progressed academically, parents' accounts of their experiences revealed a number of specific challenges that impacted upon home-school partnerships. Their accounts provide a valuable and important insight into the role that parents play in children's education and the importance of home-school partnerships.

Home-learning in COVID-19

Home-learning in this context refers to children learning from home under the care of parents as a result of social restrictions enforced to minimise the spread of COVID-19. Globally this affected 91.2% of total enrolled learners in April 2020 (UNESCO, 2020), with schools in Australia initially closed or operating in limited capacity from March (states varied in implementing restrictions). In Tasmania, where most of the study's participants resided, restricted school access began on March 31st, with a staged return to school occurring in early June 2020 (see Clark, 2022 for other state details). Due to the urgency of government bodies pressure to minimise the spread of COVID-19, teachers and parents had minimal time to prepare themselves, or their children, to a home-learning environment with little information available regarding how long this would last for. Due to the relative recency of the pandemic, there is, understandably limited published empirical studies that report on the experiences of home-learning during periods of lockdown. Nevertheless, studies suggest that for some, the home-learning experience was primarily positive, with parental involvement leading to more knowledge and insight about their child's learning (Bubb & Jones, 2020).

In contrast, other studies reported a more negative experience for parents, some reporting an increase in domestic conflict and stress, poor-quality home-learning, and little support for special needs children (e.g. Thorell et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2022). Roy et al. (2022) conducted three studies in the

United States and Australia, involving 606 children, and reported that findings were consistent across countries, ADHD status, and age, suggesting that many parental responses to home-learning appeared to be universal. For example, parents reported children having difficulty staying on task, lack of motivation, and lack of social interaction. Other parental challenges included balancing home-learning with work responsibilities and limited direct contact with teachers. General concerns that home-learning would widen the attainment gap between poorer children and those from more affluent backgrounds have also been raised (Bessell, 2022; for more information on the digital divide, see Cullinane & Montacute, 2020; Flack et al., 2020a; Park, 2017). Organisational issues were among challenges reported by Häkkilä et al. (2020), with parents finding it necessary to adjust physical spaces in the home and work schedules to support their child(ren)'s learning at home. Other studies highlight differences in terms of parental roles and responsibilities. In the UK and Germany, for instance, parents were primarily responsible for teaching their children, with little to no contact with teachers during the home-learning experience (Thorell et al., 2022). In addition to this, female carers or parents were most likely to oversee the home-learning (Miller, 2020; Petts et al., 2021). Khan (2022) reported that almost 80% of UK parents struggled to grasp the teaching methods which varied from their schooling experiences. Other challenges included adjusting to the change in routine (both educationally and socially), access to and quality of remote learning, lack of resources (Khan, 2022) and keeping children motivated (Bhamani et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2022). Other studies (e.g. Garbe et al., 2020) found that even when parents were generally satisfied with the level of support provided by their child's school, they still experienced difficulties with balancing responsibilities, learner motivation, accessibility and learning outcomes.

In a study similar to the one discussed in this paper, but conducted in Northern Ireland, Bates et al. (2023) also documented parents' experiences of how they supported their child's learning at home during the first period of school closure. In particular, they investigated parents' perceptions of home/school communication, their confidence with supervising children's learning, and difficulties they encountered. Survey responses ($N = 2509$) indicated that guidance provided to parents and on-going home-school communication varied considerably from school to school and even classroom to classroom. While positive experiences were reported, most parents indicated that home-learning led to increased levels of stress, worry, social isolation, insufficient support from schools, and limited contact with teachers. It was also apparent that the challenges were particularly acute for parents of children who had special educational needs. Like our study, Bates et al. (2023) applied Epstein's framework (2009) to guide their study and found it a valuable lens to interpret the significance of parents' experiences during the home-learning period.

Specific to Australia, Calear et al.' (2022) research with parents found that lower levels of perceived support from their children's school negatively affected levels of psychological distress. In a different Australian study that involved parents responding to open-ended questions at three different points in time (May 2020; June 2020; March 2021), researchers focused on what could be done differently should home-learning be re-introduced (Morse et al., 2022). Support relating to scheduling and prioritisation of schoolwork with other competing demands, alongside support for parents who lack confidence in supporting children learning from home, were key items identified.

In summary the research points to not only variability in parental experiences, but variability in terms of the support from schools that parents and students received. Collective findings revealed that parents valued guidance and support provided by schools and the value of strong two-way communications between school and home was emphasised (e.g. Bates et al., 2023). Notably, we seek to build upon this research by investigating Australian parents' perspectives on learning from home, and the impact this had on home-school relationships.

Parental engagement

Studying home-learning experiences due to the pandemic provides a unique context to explore home-school connections and partnerships, as schools and teachers, nationally and internationally, have had to interact with students in new and different ways. While there is strong consensus that parental engagement with their child(ren)'s education significantly influences academic attainment (Emerson et al., 2012), it can also lead to increases in students' motivation, and self-confidence (Goodall, 2022).

Distinguishing *parental involvement with learning* from *parental involvement with the school*, Goodall (2022) posits that *parental involvement with learning* will most fully support students' outcomes. She argues that building relationships between families and schools is at the heart of supporting parental engagement in learning and that communication is at the heart of building relationships. In relation to this, the home-learning situation that occurred as a direct result of COVID-19 provided the opportunity for parents to move beyond involvement at a school level, to being facilitators of their child(ren)'s learning, often for a sustained length of time (in Australia and England, many schools shut down for six months).

Parent involvement and engagement with schools is known to be influenced by social determinants (Emerson et al., 2012), such as educational background (Chesters & Daly, 2018) and social class (Lareau, 2011), and was therefore likely to impact parents' engagement and experiences of home-learning during COVID-19. For example, Lareau's (2011) seminal work illustrates how middle-class parents are more likely to ascribe to a 'concerted cultivation' parenting philosophy, whereby parents are active in fostering their children's talents and exhibit agency in interactions with schools. There is a tendency for parents who possess social and cultural capital which aligns to that of the school, to be more actively engaged with the school (Borgonovi & Montt, 2012). Parental involvement, particularly on site, can therefore disadvantage parents who are less likely to come into the school (Goodall, 2022).

Parental willingness to be involved with their child's education and school is also influenced by other factors, including the aspirations they have for their children, their parenting self-efficacy, and their perceptions of the school (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). Factors such as lack of time, access, financial resources, and awareness have also been shown to be barriers to involvement (Williams & Sánchez, 2011). For some parents, previous negative experiences with their own schooling can lead to feelings of inadequacy and may prevent parents from communicating with schools (Johnson, 1994). While it may be assumed that middle-class parents, and/or those who have had positive school experiences, would be more comfortable in taking on the responsibilities of supporting their children with home-learning, this assumption has not been widely researched.

Much of the research related to parental involvement has its origins in Epstein's framework of parental involvement, which is cited as the most used framework for involving parents (Goodall, 2022). The framework is useful in that it breaks parental involvement into easily recognisable categories, and school staff can use the categories to evaluate their performance. However, even Epstein acknowledges that the framework itself does not ensure an effective program of partnerships, leading Goodall (2022) to offer a new framework that is family-centric, focuses on relationships, and the family learning environment. The next section describes Epstein's framework, with reference to additional elements as identified by Goodall (2022).

Epstein's framework

Epstein (2009), who has been a fervent advocate for the importance of strong home-school partnerships, identified three overlapping spheres of influence on students' learning and growth: The family, the school, and the community. Effective home-school partnerships are created through overlapping of involvement between these three spheres. Related to this model, Epstein (2009) also identified six types of involvement–parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration (see Table 1). There is a relationship between the two models, and both prove useful for evaluating home-school partnerships (Wadham et al., 2020). Epstein's (2009) model of six types of involvement was used as a conceptual framework in this study, and her framework has been used previously in studies that have examined the effective of partnership activities (e.g. Bates et al., 2023; Sheldon et al., 2010; Wadham et al., 2020).

When Epstein (2009) identified parenting as a type of involvement and described it as helping families establish home environments to support children as students, it is unlikely that she saw the home environment as having to literally serve as a substitute for the classroom environment. Table 1 provides an overview of Epstein's six types of involvement, which includes learning at home.

According to Epstein (2009), these levels of involvement can increase the overlap between the student's family, school, and community. Epstein's (2009) framework was conceptualised in the context of

Table 1. Epstein's framework of parental involvement.

Level of Involvement	Description
Parenting	Includes all of the activities that parents engage in with their children; facilitated when family practices and home environments support children as students and when schools understand their children's families
Communicating	Occurs when educators, students, and families design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication; includes school newsletters, parent-teacher conferences
Volunteering	Recruitment of parents to help and support school programs and student activities
Learning at home	Parental participation in homework and curricular-related activities; facilitated when school provides guidance and information to families and encourage them to interact with the school curriculum
Decision making	Inclusion of parents in school decisions; involvement in school organisational bodies
Community collaboration	Identification and integration of community services and resources to support schools, students, and their families.

Table 2. Elements of parental involvement and parental engagement.

Supporting parental involvement with school	Supporting parental engagement with learning
Focus on school	Focus on learning
Focus on parental interaction with school	Focus on parental interactions with their children
School regularly communicates with parents	School ensures that parents receive positive communication in relation to their child's learning
	Communication between school staff and parents is mostly two-way and focused on learning
School informs parents of learning tasks	Staff actively engage with parents to support learning
Parents seen as helping teachers, supporting the school	Parents seen as partners in supporting learning

parental involvement whereby children physically attended a school site. COVID-19 required a level of parental involvement beyond that identified in Epstein's (2009) framework, particularly in terms of 'learning at home'. While each of the six types of involvement were still applicable in the home-learning context that occurred as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the expectations around some levels of involvement were considerably higher. Parental roles were also likely to be extended. For example, parents who may have volunteered once a week in their child's classroom were suddenly tasked with taking on increased responsibility for their child's learning at home. The situation, therefore, required an increase in parental involvement, with the importance of strong home-school partnerships being paramount.

Twenty-five years after its conceptualisation, Goodall (2022) examined the usefulness of the Epstein framework, given the advances in understanding parental engagement. Table 2 identifies the elements from Epstein's framework that are most relevant to the home-learning experienced by COVID-19, and the corresponding elements from Goodall's (2022) new framework, that moves from Parental Involvement with School (Epstein's focus) to Parent Engagement in Learning (Goodall's focus).

As can be seen from the elements in the second column, home-learning as experienced through COVID-19 provided an ideal opportunity for school communities to engage with parental communities, whereby parents were seen as partners in supporting their children's learning.

Method

In this study we were interested in the ways in which schools and parents approached home-learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. We anticipated that if schools provided a good level of support, then parents would feel more positively about the home-learning experience and less concerned about their child's academic progress. Our intention for this study is to document the key strategies employed by schools and parents to home-learning so that if a lockdown occurs in the future, or if home-learning is offered as an option for students, teachers can be aware of what worked well in establishing good home-school connections and satisfying parent's expectations of their child's learning.

This study employed a mixed methods approach and followed a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach was considered appropriate as neither quantitative or qualitative methods were deemed sufficient to capture the trends and details of the situation. The survey allowed us to collect data from the wider population about their experiences, while the semi-structured interviews provided further insight into participants' experiences. The study received full ethical approval

from the researching institution. An online survey was constructed to collect general information regarding parent demographics, and items related to parents' perceptions of school provision of learning materials and guidance, home-school connections, children learning, and their child(ren)'s academic progress during the home-learning period. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with willing survey respondents to further explore how they interpreted the questions contained within the survey and to identify aspects of the home-learning experience that parents found either particularly challenging or rewarding.

The survey was advertised across a range of online spaces including but not limited to social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, newsletters, and the websites of various parent and community groups, such as Anglicare and Raising Children Network. To entice participation, we provided a graphic flyer which asked, 'How did you find learning from home arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic?' and 'If you are a parent or carer of a child in primary school, we want to hear from you: Link to survey'. Participants were asked to record their levels of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale to a range of items related to their experiences with the learning at home situation. Individual responses were collected from 171 participants, reporting on the experiences of 223 children[1]. Provision was also made for participants to add further clarification on their responses through an open invitation to tell us anything else they would like to report on about their experiences. In total, 91 open-ended responses were received. Participants were also invited to participate in a follow-up interview. Participants who selected this option then provided their contact details, which enabled their survey responses to be linked with the interviews.

A semi-structured interview schedule was devised that began with inviting parents to talk about their experiences generally, how well the school met their expectations, and in what ways. This general question was then followed with more targeted questions in relation to guidance, responsibilities for learning, connections to the school, understanding their child as a learner, and their child's progress. Further probing questions related to what they saw as their main responsibility in home-learning and how the school supported them in managing these responsibilities. Parents were also asked if they had enjoyed home-learning and why, what subjects they found the more rewarding or difficult, and how motivated their child was. Table 3 provides an overview of how survey items and interview questions were mapped against the varying factors that impacted upon parents' perceptions of the home-learning situation.

Interviews were carried out individually using phone or the Zoom video conferencing platform and were approximately 30 minutes in duration. Participants gave permission to be video or audio recorded. Recordings were transcribed using Otter Voice Meeting Notes which were then checked by the interviewer for accuracy and sent to participants for verification. In total, 29 interviews were conducted.

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore the levels of agreement for each of the survey items, including frequency counts, percentages, and cross-tabulation. Open-ended answers and interview transcripts were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke (2022) approach through NVivo. Consistent with sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), thematic analysis of the qualitative data from the survey responses and the interviews was both inductive and deductive. Following code reduction, 15 codes were identified, and included aspects such as experiences, differentiation, motivation, and connections. These codes were then deductively grouped into themes corresponding to the variables in the survey items. As an example, the following open-ended response was coded as perceptions of guidance (negative): 'I believe the school failed in providing me with support for my eldest child with learning disabilities'. The following interview transcript excerpt was coded as experiences (positive), school management, and learning materials, which were further grouped under the theme of perceptions of guidance (positive):

> So they sent packages, like the five minutes challenge and mental map. So that gave him some time to work on those, and he was able to do them for five to 10 minutes every day. And he liked those. So I could just leave him for 10 minutes and he was concentrated.

Survey items 1, 2, and 3 focused on communication and connections with the school and were seen as connection variables, whereas survey questions 4 and 5 were seen as learning variables that focused

Table 3. Overview of survey items and related interview questions.

Varying Perceptions	Related survey items	Related interview questions
Guidance	I felt the school provided enough guidance to help me to support my child(ren) while learning at home I found myself teaching beyond the learning materials provided by the teacher	Could you provide a summary of what your role was during the lockdown period? What guidance did your child's teacher provide? What resources did the school provide for you? What did the school expect you to do? What did you see as your main responsibilities? What were your expectations around what the school provided?
Connection	I feel more connected to my child's school following the home-learning period	How did the school support you in managing the situation? In what ways did you feel connected to the school during this experience? What did the school/teacher do to make connections?
Learning	The experience of home-learning has helped me to understand how my child learns	What were the benefits for your child in the home learning situation? How was your child's motivation for learning at home? What subjects did you find the most rewarding/least rewarding to support your children? What insights (if any) did you gain into how your child(ren) learns?
Academic progress	I feel my child has continued to progress in their education during the home-learning period	What impact do you feel that the home-learning period might have had on your child(ren)'s learning? If more than one child, did this vary according to your child's age?

on the child's learning and academic progress. These codes were then checked for reliability by a group of co-researchers and meetings were held to discuss agreement and make adjustments.

Findings

Background information and demographics

Of the 171 participants who responded to the survey, most were between 41 and 55 years of age (62%), and university educated (81%); 45% worked from home full-time during the home-learning period. Many participants lived in major cities (45%) or inner regional areas (39%) and generally lived in high-socioeconomic areas (52%).[2] Table 4 contains additional demographic information related to children's grades, type of school attended, and length of the home-learning period. It is also worth noting that the sample captured 20% of children who were classed as special needs. To capitalise on participants' experiences as soon as possible after the imposed learning from home period, it was not feasible to develop a comprehensive sampling frame nor was it possible to engage in random sampling techniques. Consequently, it must be noted that the findings of the study may not be representative of the broader Australian population, as the demographics indicate that our participants were potentially highly capable and interested in supporting their children in their learning. Despite these aspects, our participants still identified challenges associated with the home-learning situation, and it is reasonable to expect that these challenges would be felt even more strongly for parents from more marginalised backgrounds.

Interview participants were selected from the pool of survey respondents who indicated they would be willing to participate in an interview regarding their experiences of home-learning. From 30 expressions of interest, 29 individuals were interviewed (one was unavailable) who differed according to the age of home-learning children, children with special needs, and positive and negative responses to the survey. It should be highlighted that in this sample we had a clear gender imbalance, with only one male interview participant (see Table 4). While this may certainly be a limitation for the generalisability of our results, it may actually be more of a reflection of how the pandemic affected roles within the family. Consistent with other findings (e.g. Miller, 2020; Petts et al., 2021), for the majority of families in our study it was females who took on the responsibility for home-learning, rather than the men or fathers, reflecting the general trend that mothers/women are more likely to be involved in children's educational activities (Miller, 2020; Petts et al., 2021).

The next section presents the findings related to parents' perceptions of guidance, connection, learning and academic progress (see Table 3).

Table 4. Overview of participant demographic information.

Parent demographic information		From Survey (N = 171)	From Interview (N = 29)	Illustrative participants
Parent Gender:	Female		97%	P16, P115
	Male		3%	P67
No of children:	One child	33%	54%*	P19, P148
	Two children	49%	33%	P161, P75
	Three children	19%	13%	P45, P159
Child's grade:	Foundation/Prep	18%	9%	N/A
	Grade 1/2	26%	43%	P26, P103
	Grade 3/4	22%	30%	P67, P148
	Grade 5/6	35%	18%	P115, P75
Home-learning period:	< 1 month	8%	12%	P148
	1–2 months	58%	50%	P81, P41
	> 2 months	35%	38%	P70, P168
Perceived role:	Parent/carer	40%	46%	P19, P119
	Teacher/Educator	40%	27%	P16, P70
	Supervisor/Manager	20%	27%	P26, P103

*Denotes the number of children that were learning from home, not total of children in family.

Perceptions of guidance

The first two survey items required parents to respond to levels of agreement statements about the provision of support offered by the school (see Figures 1 and 2).

The figures show that the majority of parents (69%) agreed that the school provided them with enough guidance to support their children, even though the majority (68%) found themselves teaching beyond the materials provided.

While the organisation and implementation of home-learning was enacted differently for individual households (even for different children within the one household), school guidance and support was usually provided through the use of an online platform and completion of set tasks as directed by the school and teachers. Qualitative comments from the survey and interviews provided further insights into how this guidance and support was enacted and received by parents, with a range of positive and negative experiences noted. Positive responses acknowledged that the school and teachers were doing the best they could, given the circumstances. For instance, SR121[3] notes that they were 'very happy with support from teachers and school staff'.

Positive comments also focused on opportunities for child and teacher interactions which demonstrated the teachers' willingness to support the home-learning situation:

> I think the school had really set them up to succeed in their home-learning. The teacher that she has is very confident with ICT and uses ICT in the classroom a lot anyway. He really supported them well in every day he would do a video first thing in the morning by way of this is what we're going to be looking at today, and I've sent you the information you need, I'll send you the files you need, and anything else is in the pack that the school had already provided as well. And he also checked in by just creating an open video conference just in case anyone had any queries. (P19)

In contrast, other parents felt that the 'school was utterly unsupportive when we asked for offline learning support' (SR114) and that 'my children's school provided barely any contact. The task information was confusing and difficult to follow' (SR110). Parents indicated that 'there was no real guidance or [advice that] we would be happy if you just did a, b, and c, there was none of that' (P70) and when asked for more guidance, one parent was told to 'tell them to stop working so hard, and don't stress out' (P161). Some parents felt that they were expected to take on the role of a substitute teacher and found it challenging to teach skills and concepts that were outside of their areas of expertise:

> So basically, [the teachers] explained the task, but it was up to the parent to explain the background concept. So there was no actual teaching going on. It was just task setting. And it was up to me, for example, with the year four one, to explain about different forms of energy, like electromagnet magnetism, they do this whole unit on it for a couple of weeks, but there was absolutely no teaching on it, it was just a whole lot of read this and then do this activity. (P161)

Some parents felt that the materials provided were not differentiated enough for their children's needs or were not stimulating enough to maintain their children's interest or engagement. Subsequently, some participants provided alternative tasks for their children than those provided by the school for example:
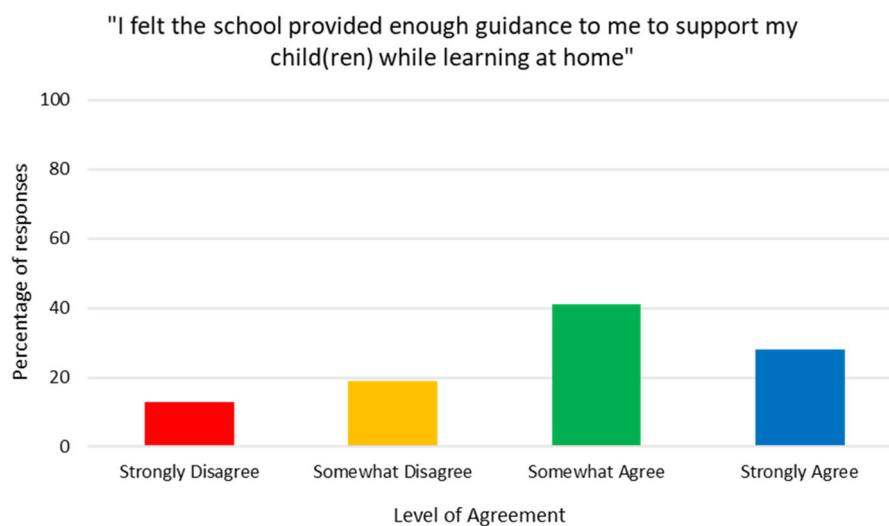
"I felt the school provided enough guidance to me to support my child(ren) while learning at home"

Figure 1. Parental perceptions of school guidance.

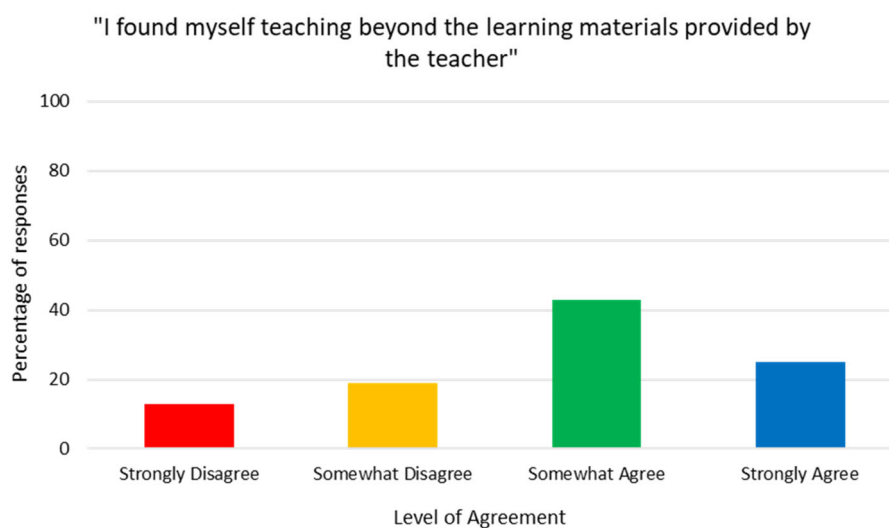**"I found myself teaching beyond the learning materials provided by the teacher"**

Figure 2. Perceptions of teaching beyond learning materials provided.

> I didn't ask them to do tasks the school set. I got them doing other things at home … I'd get them doing things like cooking or we might talk about topics and look up really cool fun stuff on YouTube that was related, a little bit sciency or a little bit maths related. They engaged better with that form. (P159)

Similarly, P119 supplemented her children's learning with additional activities:

> I did a whole lot of posters that we put on the wall about activity ideas for them. From physical ideas through to craft ideas, through to technology based ideas … a whole range of different things, so there were mind maps that they could go to and consider what they might do if they finish their schoolwork. (P119)

Perceptions of connection

Figure 3 shows that while 62% of parents felt more connected to their child's school, this was not the case for 38% of parents. Parents who indicated that they felt more connected with the school, either in their survey or interview responses, referred to increased opportunities to interact with the school and teacher, particularly on a regular basis. The importance of communication was emphasised, as was the accessibility to their children's teachers. The following interview quotes are illustrative of the positive aspects that were highlighted:

Definitely more connected … you have more transparency to what they're doing on a day-to-day basis. There was a lot of sharing going on … and then of course there were the school newsletters that came out which tried to keep the connection going. (P103)

While we had lockdown and some children were at school, we sent photos of our children's work, or they sent them and their buddies at school sent photos back. So that sort of thing was really connecting. (P45)

Regular interactions with the teacher through phone calls, Zoom or WebEx were viewed positively as a means of communicating and maintaining connections. The following quotes illustrate the various ways in which this occurred and the impact it had:

The best bit was probably the communication. The two teachers from my children's classes contacted us about once a week and it was just to catch up. How are they going? Is there anything else we could do? Has there been any problems? They were always in contact. (P67)

So the teacher was meeting with the whole class for 15 minutes every morning, at quarter past nine. We couldn't do it every day, but the teacher was there every day. And then she was having 15 minutes for reading time every week, so it was different days for different children, my son's time was on Friday. And so, they were together just with the teacher one to one. (P41)

For other parents, the experience did not strengthen the home-school partnerships, with feedback indicating that this was primarily influenced by a lack of communication. Survey responses, for example, included comments such as 'For my child in Grade 5 there was no communication from the teacher to me whatsoever' (SR145) and 'My children's school provided barely any contact' (SR110). The lack of communication and regular contact were also referred to in the interviews:

I don't think there was enough engagement with the school. So we didn't have like that connection with the school. My children's connection and my connection just sort of was not there. There was WebEx once a day and things like that. But my daughter, especially in grade six, needed a lot more feedback and connection, but she didn't have that. (P168)

In most instances children were expected to complete assigned tasks and return them to school, usually via an online platform. There was rarely any detailed feedback to the children on the work received, leading some parents to feel that the work at home was not valued. Opportunities to engage in exchanges about work completed were not capitalised on in many situations which impacted upon home-school relationships. The following quote from one parent illustrates the impact this had on her and her child:

At the end of learning at home, I deliberately bought him a folder, and we put every bit of work that he did in it, because he was really proud of a lot of the things that he did and he took it back to school and they sent it back saying, 'No, we don't need that. You shouldn't be bringing stuff to school'. So that was a bit soul destroying. [During home-learning] we never saw any feedback on the work so I just really struggled to know
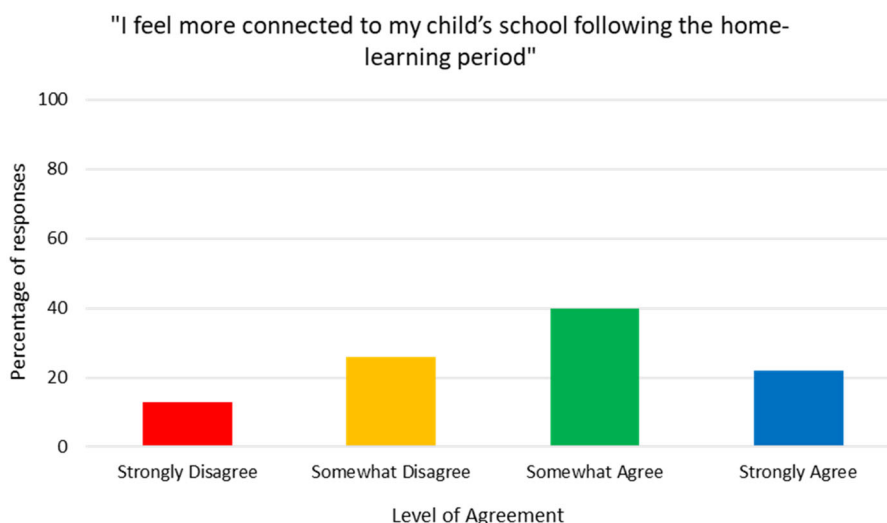

Figure 3. Parental perceptions of school connectedness.

… my son needs a connection with the school, he needs to hear someone's voice even if it's for three minutes. You know, it was really hard. (P75)

For other parents, the experience neither strengthened nor weakened the home-school partnership as 'we probably feel as connected to the school as we did before'. (P26). For those parents, the mode of delivery was different, but essentially, they still felt connected to the school and teacher because they already had that relationship in place, and it continued throughout the experience.

Some parents who were interviewed after their children had returned to school, missed the sustained involvement in their child's learning as the following quote from P103 illustrates:

If we talk about the girls being back at school now - there's a few bits and pieces on Classdojo about what they're doing, but we're getting no visibility in what they're doing now. We've gone from such visibility in terms of the handwriting and spelling mistakes, and things like that [to] no visibility on how they are going.

Perceptions of understanding children's learning

Despite many of the challenges that came with home-learning, parents saw the increased opportunity to interact with their children's learning as a positive outcome of the situation.

As Figure 4 shows, a larger proportion (85%) of survey respondents agreed that home-learning helped them to understand how their child learns. Through the interview data in particular, parents commented on how the experience provided them with insights into their child's knowledge and learning styles and acknowledged that such insights may not have occurred if learning at home had not been imposed. Parents, such as P16, found their child 'was a lot further along than I think even her teacher knows', and 'it was really nice being able to concentrate on the issues she needed help with' (P81). Another parent commented:

I got a better sense of my children's learning styles, I got a better sense of the fact that they are definitely extroverts who enjoy a lot of time with friends. And that's what sustains them at school, that the content of the classroom curriculum may not be meeting their academic needs, but because they're social children, their peers keep them positive and engaged. (P119)

Similarly, P161 identified in her interview that:

It was really good to see where their strengths and weaknesses were. So I found that both the children, but especially my son, were far more capable than I realized. And also just pointed out some areas that the teachers had said that my year 4 daughter was fine in, like really good, but actually, she didn't have a good understanding and parts of maths and was a good opportunity for me to go over that with her.

Even when the insights into learning revealed weaknesses or concerns, this was still generally seen as a positive benefit for parents who could then devote time to working individually with their children on their learning:

We got a real insight into where he is and the fact that he needs so much more help in class and out of class … and we may not have realized that unless we hadn't have gone through the COVID lockdown. So something positive has come out of it … the way that we were teaching him, it seemed things seemed to sink in. And if we realized if that approach doesn't work, we're able to word things differently for him and he wouldn't have got that in school. (P70)

Perceptions of academic progress

While 73% of parents felt that their child continued to progress during the home-learning period, further analysis revealed that the majority of these had children in F-2 grades (84%); 37% of parents with children in older grades (5/6) disagreed with this statement (Figure 5). Interview data and open-ended survey responses indicated overall, however, that most parents were not overly concerned that the period of learning from home impacted adversely upon their children's academic progress. This seemed particularly true for parents with children in early grades (F-4). For example, parents commented that 'he has not fallen behind but he has not progressed in his learning' (SR120); 'I don't think she's going to suffer from this at all. I do think she probably would have been further along. But it's not going to be below
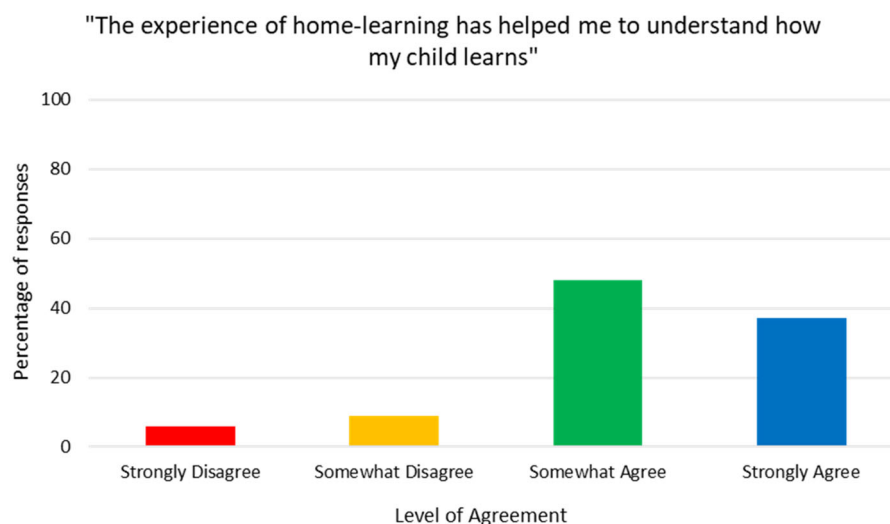
"The experience of home-learning has helped me to understand how my child learns"

Figure 4. Parental perceptions of children's learning.

where she needs to be in grade four'. (P16); 'He learnt more at home than he ever did at school. And we only did English, Maths, and a bit of Science - no more than 2 hours per day'. (SR70); and:

> I don't think he's going to be academically too far behind … and for my middle boy, I don't think it'll affect him academically … and for my daughter I don't think academically she's going to be adversely affected … she engaged with the platform, she got the ideas and the links … I'm not worried about it. (P159)

Some parents, however, particularly those with children in older grades, found that the home environment was not particularly conducive to learning and therefore impacted negatively on their children's academic progress and engagement with their learning generally:

> I think in my mind, there has been a drop in academic skills because of the home-learning, and not being able to interact with the teacher and getting more answers, and explaining it in writing, as opposed to doing it on- whatever online. So all these techniques has got to have had a toll on them. (P115)

> If I did get her to do anything, it would be very half hearted. And you know, she had her spelling words, but wouldn't even try. They'd be written all over the page in weird angles and varying sized letters, and you know, the kind of stuff you wouldn't do in class (P148)

For parents who had children with particular needs, it appears the situation was exacerbated through the provision of learning materials and experiences which were not tailored to the needs of their children: 'The home-schooling was not adapted to help my child who has Dyslexia and Dysgraphia. This is his last year of primary school and already behind. Now he feels even further behind'. (SR66);

> My grade 1 child is gifted and talented. However, he continued to receive the same tasks as his classmates throughout home-learning which meant that I needed to supply material a couple of grades beyond in order to keep him motivated (SR161)

One parent was particularly concerned about her child's academic progress and sceptical about the benefits of informal learning opportunities, particularly as he was heading off to high school the following year:

> So it would be like don't put pressure on yourself, baking a cake, and playing a board game is all learning, which to me I felt like saying well that's fine if your kid's in Grade 1. But when you have a child in Grade 6 who's already behind and starting high school next year, baking a cake and playing Monopoly is not going to get him ready for high school. (P66)

For most parents, the period of home-learning was perceived as having little negative impact on their children's academic progress, while others, including those with special needs children, felt that their child's academic progress was impacted negatively. Perceptions were likely influenced by the age of their children, with parents of older children being more concerned, and the length of the home-learning period that they experienced, which was up to 3 months for some parents (see Table 3).
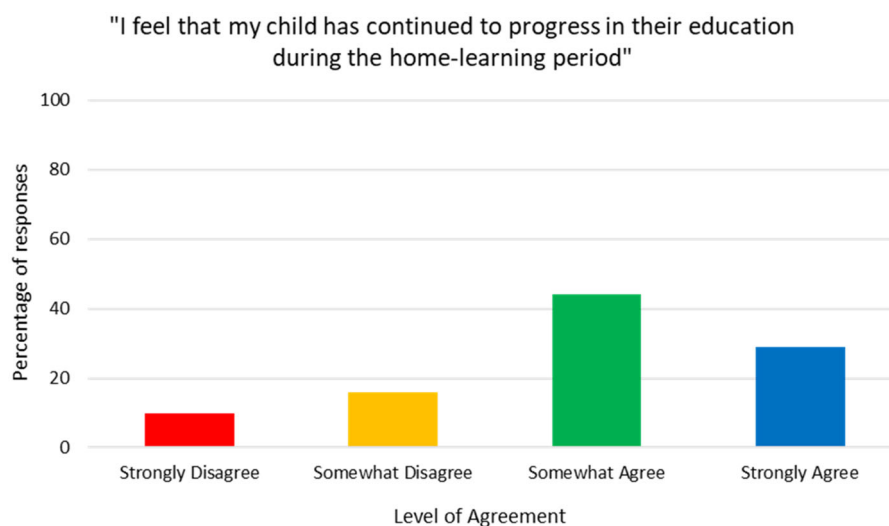
Figure 5. Perceptions of academic progress.

Discussion

In this study, we surveyed and interviewed parents who were involved in home-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). We were interested in understanding how parents felt about this experience for themselves and for their children, and whether this had an impact on home-school connections and perceived academic progress. The results demonstrate varying success of home-learning, with many parents citing positive experiences, such as greater interaction with their children and gaining valuable insights into how and what their children were learning. The qualitative results in particular show that within each of the variables investigated, there was a mix of positive and negative experiences. Variations between the participants in terms of their parental roles and responsibilities provided examples of positive and negative experiences, which even varied between members of the same household. Below, we discuss the key findings and implications of our study using the three key components from Epstein's (2009) theoretical framework of effective home-school partnerships: parenting, communicating, and learning at home.

Parental role

We were interested in how schools provided support for parents during the imposed learning at home period. In particular, we were interested in seeing this from parents' perspectives, considering that other research had shown that teachers had concerns about the parents' role in home-learning, highlighting potential lack of time and resources (Flack et al., 2020b). Presented results in relation to this aspect included guidance and learning, and the findings were mixed. While parents acknowledged schools were doing the best they could under the circumstances, some felt that the school was unsupportive or did not provide adequate guidance for home-learning experiences. What emerged from this was a reliance on parents to take on the role of the teacher, a commitment that proved challenging for many parents, in terms of time and capacity. This created a tension between the school seeing parents as helpers (Epstein, 2009), rather than seeing them as partners in supporting learning (Goodall, 2022). As evidenced in the results, some parents found themselves supplying resources and providing guidance on tasks much like a teacher normally would do. Participants were predominantly university educated (81%) and from high socio-economic areas (52%) which may have influenced the tendency for them to take on the role of 'teacher' in the absence of school guidance. As a result of the additional responsibilities, parents felt stressed, and in some cases, this would lead to abandoning suggested activities. This finding was similar to other studies that reported increased levels of stress and worry, alongside the primary responsibility of managing their child(ren)'s schooling (e.g. Beasy et al., 2021; Thorell et al., 2022). While the majority of parents in our study were university educated, they still found it challenging to adopt the role of a teacher, despite them having experienced school success in the past. This finding suggests that it may not be past schooling experiences that impacts upon parental involvement (e.g. Johnson, 1994), but the

assumption or unrealistic expectation that a parent has the necessary pedagogical skills to actually 'teach' rather than facilitate learning. There was little evidence that school staff actively engaged with parents to support learning (Goodall, 2022), other than informing them of learning tasks.

Some parents, however, welcomed the opportunity to take more of a teacher role in their children's learning, which allowed them the freedom to teach their children beyond the curriculum and assigned tasks. This particular aspect was viewed quite positively by parents and led to greater engagement from their children. Literature has shown that parental engagement with schoolwork (Castro et al., 2015) and home-based involvement (e.g. taking children to museums and libraries; Hill & Tyson, 2009) is associated with improved academic achievement. It is possible that this is because parents are better positioned to cater for their child's individual needs, while centring their best interests (Jolly et al., 2013).

As previously mentioned, our sample of parents was predominantly female which is consistent with findings that showed that the female carers or mothers primarily took on the responsibility of home-learning (e.g. Miller, 2020; Petts et al., 2021). Further studies could investigate whether or not similar perspectives were held by male carers who took on responsibility for home-learning.

Communicating

We also looked at how parents experienced connection and communication with their schools, which was another element of Epstein's (2009) framework and included as 'connections' in the results. Communication appeared to be a key indicator for home-school partnerships and connections. Some parents had positive experiences, noting their school communicated with them effectively such as through newsletters, emails, phone calls, or overall high accessibility to teacher support, which led to higher feelings of connection. Parents who had positive experiences referred to the teacher's consistent availability and acknowledged the efforts made to check in with their students. Teachers who facilitated online sessions where children could interact with their peers, were particularly appreciated. A welcoming climate where school staff are respective and responsive to parents is a vital component of communicating (Epstein, 2009) and again, if parents feel a lack of confidence in their own abilities, then that may impact upon their willingness to communicate (Johnson, 1994).

As the results demonstrated, some parents were disappointed with their school's lack of communication, and thus described lower feelings of connection with the school. Concerns included little to no communication, and lack of feedback on work. These findings are consistent with Roy et al. (2022) findings that parents identified limited direct contact with teacher as a common challenge. It seems the whole process of receiving feedback on submitted work was not managed well in most situations, which did not serve to strengthen home-school partnerships. Some parents assiduously ensured that completed work was returned as requested, sometimes with limited or no feedback provided. For some, this proved to be a barrier for effective parental engagement as it could be perceived as a lack of proper recognition by teachers of the potential contribution to learning offered by parental behaviours and support in the home (e.g. Emerson et al., 2012). Rather than the two-way communication advocated by Goodall (2022), it seemed that in the home-learning situation, the communication was primarily one way from the school to the home.

The concerns raised in relation to communication in these experiences is worrisome, considering the effect that school closures may have on students' sense of belonging and feelings of self-worth (OECD, 2020). It may be that the unique situation imposed by COVID-19 exposed teachers' lack of experience in transferring the learning from the classroom to the home, without affording them the training, time, or opportunity to examine their own roles in promoting partnerships with parents (Emerson et al., 2012). Overall, however, it must be noted that parents indicated that the school connection did not overly influence their child's academic progress. This could be due, perhaps, to parents' perceptions that they already had strong relationships with the school which did not change during the home-learning period, or that parents were prepared to take on additional responsibility for their child's learning for a limited amount of time.

Learning at home

Parents' experiences of home-learning through engaging in learning activities with their children at home was also of particular interest and were presented as 'learning' in the results section. Overall, parents

reported that the experience led them to better understand how their child learns. Both quantitative and qualitative data results indicated that parents had a better sense of their children's learning styles, their academic strengths and weaknesses, and understood what stage of learning their children were at. As a result of family practices and home environments supporting children as students (Epstein, 2009), parents were more readily able to individualise and cater for their child's learning. This was perceived positively and provides a clear benefit of the home-learning experience, which is consistent with previous COVID-related research (Bubb & Jones, 2020). While access to technology and internet connectivity did not seem to be an issue for these parents (as reported in other studies, i.e. Park, 2017), participation in this study was only possible online, therefore, it could be assumed that technology was readily accessible in the homes of participants. This could be attributable to the large representation of participants from major urban areas and the relatively high number of participants from high socio-economic backgrounds. Similarly, the propensity for parents to take on the role of the teacher is likely reflective of the middle-class background of the majority of participants (Lareau, 2011). Like the parents in Roy et al. (2022) study, our parents found the keeping their children on task and motivated was an identified challenge.

Academic achievement

At the conclusion of the home-learning experience, parents' personal assessments of their child's academic progress were mixed, as can be seen in the results section Some parents noted that although home-learning may have set them back slightly, it would not impact negatively upon their children's overall academic progress. Other parents noted that their child learned more at home than at school, and parents of older children or those who had special needs, expressed more concerns about their children's academic progress. However, as discussed above, parents' insights into how the child learns, opportunities to teach beyond learning materials, and being provided with sufficient guidance, may have indicated how parents' perceived child academic achievement.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting findings. Firstly, recruitment occurring solely through social media may have limited the sample size to only those individuals who are active on these platforms and excluded those who do not use them (i.e. Facebook). Furthermore, we acknowledge that the sample is not representative of the broader Australian population, in part due to the demographic limitations of the online nature of the research and reliance of social media for recruitment. Nevertheless, if this relatively homogenous group of parents found the experience challenging, it is reasonable to assume that the issues would be exacerbated for parents from a diverse range of backgrounds (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Lareau, 2011). Similarly, the participants were all parents of primary school aged children, and often with multiple children. While we cannot generalise to different age groups, it is reasonable to expect similar experiences, but follow-up studies could determine if similar benefits and challenges were identified by parents with younger children and those in secondary school. In follow-up research, these limitations should be considered and future research should aim to use multiple recruitment methods and rigorous data verification procedures.

Conclusions

The rapid shift to home-learning as a result of COVID-19 provided an unprecedented situation to develop our understanding about home-school connections. It seems that parents appreciate and, for the most part, want more connection with teachers, and want more information about how their children are progressing, including how they are learning and what they are learning. Feedback from parents indicated that when there was strong communication and support given to their child, this resulted in satisfaction and increased motivation. The nature of learning at home during COVID-19 required levels of commitment and guidance with their child(ren)'s learning, beyond what was previously experienced by the parent participants. There was greater potential for, and indeed expectation from, the parents of two-way communication channels required to facilitate successful experiences. The COVID-19 situation required parents to interact with

teachers and teachers to interact with parents in ways not typically experienced before. When appropriate channels of communication were established, perceptions of outcomes were better as well as general feelings of connectedness to the school and to their children's learning. The experience highlighted the need to move beyond Epstein's framework for supporting *parental involvement with school* (2009) to recognise the increased expectation for *parental engagement with learning* as advocated by Goodall (2022).

Findings reported in this paper adds to our collective understanding of how almost 200 Australian parents experienced a period of home-learning in 2020 as a result of COVID-19. When schools were originally locked down, there was general concern that home-learning would halt student learning. Our study provides evidence that for many students, particularly in the early grades, engagement was maintained, and parents were not overly concerned about their children's progress. Conversely, many parents welcomed the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of not only *what* their children were learning in school, but *how* they learned. Parents found it helpful when teachers encouraged or created one-on-one time between child and teacher, kept in contact through newsletters, or daily/weekly video check ins, and catered for children's individual learning needs. Conversely, parents found it unhelpful when teachers did not accept or grade completed work, when there was little contact between home and school, little guidance given to how to complete tasks and task-setting rather than teaching, and not accommodating children with special needs. These findings have implications for educational and school communities beyond COVID-19 and point to the need to capitalise on learning at home opportunities to strengthen home-school connections. Like Morse et al. (2022), we note this was a challenging period for many parents, and recommend supports that include clear guidance on how to balance schoolwork with other competing demands, assist parents who lack confidence in supporting their children's remote learning, and address risks associated with social isolation.

School leaders could consider the factors that parents found helpful, such as one-on-one time between child and teacher, and implement these experiences into their school practice. Other practical implications include schools and teachers being realisticabout what they expect parents to do, and consider the associated pedagogical considerations given that they are not trained teachers. Conversely, parents gleaned valuable insights into how their child(ren) learned, and these insights could prove valuable to school personnel who work and interact with their children. The study also provides insights into how parent's involvement in home-learning can foster stronger relationships in the home and increase parental awareness of children's knowledge and capacity to learn. Further studies could investigate the experiences of home-learning from children's perspectives.

Notes

1. The option to provide information on the experiences of multiple children was available.
2. Measures of Remoteness and Socio-economic Status were generated from participants post-codes using ABS data cubes from the 2016 census. It is recognised that ideally these demographics should be calculated at the SA1 level however this information was not available due to concerns regarding participant privacy and confidentiality. As a result, these demographics should be interpreted with caution.
3. Note SR refers to open-ended survey response; P refers to interview participant

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

About the authors

Dr Tracey Muir is a Professor of Education at the Australian Catholic University.

Bethany Muir is a PhD candidate at the Australian National University.

Dr David Hicks is a lecturer at the University of Tasmania.

Dr Kim Beasy is a lecturer at the University of Tasmania.

Dr Carol Murphy is a senior lecturer at the University of Tasmania.

References

Bates, J., Finlay, J., & O'Connor Bones, U. (2023). "Education cannot cease": The experiences of parents of primary age children (age 4-11) in Northern Ireland during school closures due to COVID-19. *Educational Review*, *75*(4), 657–679. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1974821

Beasy, K., Murphy, C., Hicks, D., & Muir, T. (2021). Learning from home learning: Crossing boundaries of place and identity. *Geographical Research*, *59*(3), 341–348. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12482

Bessell, S. (2022). The impacts of COVID-19 on children in Australia: Deepening poverty and inequality. *Children's Geographies*, *20*(4), 448–458. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2021.1902943

Bhamani, S., Makhdoom, A. Z., Bharuchi, V., Ali, N., Kaleem, S., & Ahmed, D. (2020). Home learning in times of COVID: Experiences of parents. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, *7*(1), 9–26. https://doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v7i1.3260

Borgonovi, F., & Montt, G. (2012). *Parental involvement in selected PISA countries and economies*. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 73. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.

Bubb, S., & Jones, M. (2020). Learning from the COVID-19 home-schooling experience: Listening to pupils, parents/carers and teachers. *Improving Schools*, *23*(3), 209–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480220958797

Calear, A. L., McCallum, S., Morse, A. R., Banfield, M., Gulliver, A., Cherbuin, N., Farrer, L. M., Murray, K., Harris, R. M. R., & Batterham, P. J. (2022). Psychosocial impacts of home-schooling on parents and caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC Public Health*, *22*(1), 119. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-12532-2

Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. L. (2015). Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, *14*, 33–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.01.002

Chesters, J., & Daly, A. (2018). *Family and school effects on educational achievement across the school career*. Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE.

Cullinane, C., & Montacute, R. (2020). *COVID-19 and social mobility brief #1: School shutdown*. Sutton Trust.

Đurišić, M., & Bunijevac, M. (2017). Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, *7*(3), 137–153. https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.291

Emerson, L., Fear, J., Fox, S., & Sanders, E. (2012). *Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research*. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau:.

Epstein, J. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*. (3rd ed.). Corwin Press.

Flack, C. B., Walker, L., Bickerstaff, A., & Margetts, C. (2020a). *Socioeconomic disparities in Australian schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Pivot Professional Learning. https://www.pivotpl.com/socioeconomic-disparities-in-australian-schooling

Flack, C. B., Walker, L., Bickerstaff, A., Earle, H., & Margetts, C. (2020b). *Educator perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning in Australia and New Zealand*. Pivot Professional Learning.

Garbe, A., Ogurlu, U., Logan, N., & Cook, P. (2020). COVID-19 and remote learning: Experiences of parents with children during the pandemic. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, *4*(3), 45–65. https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/8471

Goodall, J. (2022). A framework for family engagement: Going beyond the Epstein framework. *Cylchgrawn Addysg Cymru / Wales Journal of Education*, *24*(2), 74–96. https://doi.org/10.16922/wje.24.2.5

Häkkilä, J., Karhu, M., Kalving, M., & Colley, A. (2020 *Practical family challenges of remote schooling during COVID-19 pandemic in Finland* [Paper presentation].Proceedings of the 11th Nordic Conference on Human-Computer Interaction: Shaping Experiences, Shaping Society,. https://doi.org/10.1145/3419249.3420155

Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, *45*(3), 740–763. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015362

Jolly, J. L., Matthews, M. S., & Nester, J. (2013). Homeschooling the gifted: A parent's perspective. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *57*(2), 121–134. https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986212469999

Johnson, V. R. (1994). Connecting families and schools through mediating structures. *The School Community Journal*, *4*(1), 45–51. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ484894

Khan, T. (2022). Parents' experiences of home-schooling amid COVID-19 school closures, in London, England. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, *20*(4), 580–594. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X221098666

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods*. (2nd ed.). University of California Press.

Miller, C. C. (2020, May 8). *Nearly half of men say they do most of the home schooling; 3 percent of women agree*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/06/upshot/pandemic-chores-homeschooling-gender.html

Morse, A. R., Banfield, M., Batterham, P. J., Gulliver, A., McCallum, S., Cherbuin, N., Farrer, L. M., & Calear, A. L. (2022). What could we do differently next time? Australian parents' experiences of the short-term and long-term impacts of home schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC Public Health*, *22*(1), 80. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-12495-4

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion: Supporting vulnerable students during school closures and school re-openings. https://read.oecd-ili-brary.org/view/?ref=434_434914-59wd7ekj29&title=The-impact-of-COVID-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion

Park, S. (2017). Digital inequalities in rural Australia: A double jeopardy of remoteness and social exclusion. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *54*, 399–407. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.12.018

Petts, R. J., Carlson, D. L., & Pepin, J. R. (2021). A gendered pandemic: Childcare, homeschooling, and parents' employment during COVID-19. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *28*(S2), 515–534. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12614

Richmond, G., Bartell, T., Cho, C., Gallagher, A., He, Y., Petchauer, E., & Curiel, L. C. (2020). Home/school: Research imperatives, learning settings, and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *71*(5), 503–504. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487120961574

Roy, A. K., Breaux, R., Sciberras, E., Patel, P., Ferrara, E., Shroff, D. M., Cash, A. R., Dvorsky, M. R., Langberg, J. M., Quach, J., Melvin, G., Jackson, A., & Becker, S. P. (2022). A preliminary examination of key strategies, challenges, and benefits of remote learning expressed by parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. *School Psychology (Washington, D.C.)*, *37*(2), 147–159. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000465

Sacks, D., Bayles, K., Taggart, A., & Noble, S. (2020). *COVID-19 and education: how Australian schools are responding and what happens next*. PwC Australia. https://www.pwc.com.au/government/government-matters/covid-19-educa-tion-how-australian-schools-are-responding.html

Seale, C. (2020). May 19). *Parent involvement has always mattered. Will the COVID-19 pandemic finally make this the new normal in k-12 education?* Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/colinseale/2020/05/19/parent-involvement-has-always-mattered-will-the-covid-19-pandemic-finally-make-this-the-new-normal-in-k-12-education/?sh=5ead5955e465

Sheldon, S. B., Epstein, J. L., & Galindo, C. L. (2010). Not just numbers: Creating a partnership climate to improve math proficiency in schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *9*(1), 27–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760802702548

Thorell, L. B., Skoglund, C., de la Peña, A. G., Baeyens, D., Fuermaier, A. B. M., Groom, M. J., Mammarella, I. C., van der Oord, S., van den Hoofdakker, B. J., Luman, M., de Miranda, D. M., Siu, A. F. Y., Steinmayr, R., Idrees, I., Soares, L. S., Sörlin, M., Luque, J. L., Moscardino, U. M., Roch, M., Crisci, G., & Christiansen, H. (2022). Parental experiences of homeschooling during the COVID-19 pandemic: differences between seven European countries and between children with and without mental health conditions. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *31*(4), 649–661. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01706-1

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. (2020). *Education: From disruption to recovery*. https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

Victorian Department of Education. (2023). *Family school learning partnerships*. https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/Pages/default.aspx

Wadham, B., Darragh, L., & Ell, F. (2020). Mathematics home-school partnerships in diverse contexts. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*, *34*(4), 679–699. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13394-020-00357-4

Williams, T. T., & Sánchez, B. (2011). Identifying and decreasing barriers to parent involvement for inner-city parents. *Youth & Society*, *45*(1), 54–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X11409066

Wrigley, T. (2020). Extraordinary times. *Improving Schools*, *23*(2), 107–108. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480220941950