Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Practices in the Education of Students with Learning Disabilities in Greece

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Abstract

Parental involvement, as well as parent and teacher relations, have been considered as a significant factor that affects children's schooling. Still, in order to foster inclusion, parent–teacher relations need further investigation. This study explores parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement in the education of students with Learning Disabilities (LD) based on Epstein's (1995) parental involvement typology. Epstein's questionnaires for parents and teachers were administered to 151 mothers, 77 fathers, 232 general, and 126 special education teachers in Greece in order to investigate their perceptions of parental involvement types and practices concerning the education of children with LD. The differences among parent- and teacher-related sociodemographic characteristics were also examined. The findings reveal that the parents associate their involvement in the education of their children with LD more with Type 1-Parenting, whereas the teachers with Type 5-Decision making. Parents use more Type 4-Learning at home practices, whereas teachers employ Type 2-Communicating practices. Notwithstanding, there are a series of statistically important findings concerning parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement and practices in the education of children with LD by sociodemographic characteristics. Results are discussed in relation to their implications in promoting more inclusive and sustainable home–school partnerships.

Key Words: parental involvement, parent practices, teacher practices, Epstein's typology, learning disabilities, inclusion, Greece, Greek education

Introduction

Over three decades now, parental involvement, as well as parent and teacher relations, have dominated educational studies. Until now, researchers have placed emphasis on how home–school collaboration may be sustainable and effective for students (Epstein, 2010), including students with disabilities (Graham, 2020). The existing corpus of literature examines parent or teacher perspectives on parental involvement, as well as parent or teacher practices in different types of schools or areas (Erdener, 2013; Garcia, 2014; Giannikas & Nikitaki, 2022; Magouirk, 2015). Some researchers focus on parent–teacher relations or practices for inclusive purposes (Botha & Kourkoutas, 2015) in a dualistic way (Laluvein, 2010). It is notable that published studies on education during the COVID-19 crisis are limited, although the COVID-19 pandemic has shocked education systems around the world, being also a catalyst for parent–teacher relations in schools. Therefore, the question arises about a school's ability to respond effectively to emergencies (Haisraeli & Fogiel-Bijaoui, 2021), as well as to all students' educational needs (Graham, 2020).

A voluminous body of literature about parental involvement indicates that home–school relations are complex and fraught with difficulties due to various reasons, such as poor school-to-home communication (Symeou et al., 2012), negative school climate (Moran et al., 2012), lack of teacher education in home–school partnerships (Eleftheriadou & Vlachou, 2020), low parental socioeconomic status or education level (Bonal & González, 2020; Magouirk, 2015), and parent and teacher attitudes and beliefs about children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). This study suggests that Epstein's theoretical model of parental involvement which emphasizes the role of the school, the family, and the community in comprehensive partnership programs, and proclaims six types of involvement practices in school and at home, may be employed as a tool by schools to overcome difficulties between families and schools, as indicated in the literature (see, Garcia, 2014; Erdener, 2013; Magouirk, 2015).

Additionally, the ethos for power-sharing between parents, schools, and agencies, especially in inclusive education, may cause additional complexities since much power still resides in the hands of education authorities and professionals. For instance, in the Greek context, insufficient emphasis is placed on the rights of parents of children with Learning Disabilities (LD) in school (Educational Law 4823/2021), which may prevent parents from being actively involved in their children's learning, since there is a lack of culture and infrastructure that may provide parents and teachers the conditions needed for reliable partnerships (Zoniou-Sideri & Vlachou, 2006) in an inclusive way.

Although the Greek law encourages the formal and legal dimension of parental involvement in schools—for example, a Parents' Association has been established in every school unit—home–school relations in a pedagogical sense are put aside (Giannikas & Nikitaki, 2022).

It has also been reported that true partnerships are disputable, because many schools lack effective mechanisms and resources to promote meaningful collaborations between parents of children with or without LD and their teachers in a collective social practice. This may be due to different, even contradictory agendas, expectations, and priorities, or even differences in parent and teacher perceptions of their involvement in school (Carrión-Martinéz et al., 2021; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). However, in order to foster inclusion in school for children with LD, sustainable home–school partnerships should be encouraged by policymakers, administrators, and school staff. This means that parental involvement should be adequately defined and understood by all stakeholders so as to include family resources that shape children's learning in educational contexts (Ainscow, 2020).

Parental Involvement in All Children's Education

Researchers have emphasized that children need the support of their parents if they are to maximize their potential from schooling (Savva & Symeou, 2019; Ulferts, 2020), especially at the preschool and primary school level (Gülhan, 2023). Parental involvement is an important predictor of children's academic success (Giannikas & Nikitaki, 2022) and their holistic development. It improves children's social, emotional, and character development; reduces school dropouts, especially in the secondary education level; as well as improving children's academic motivation, self-efficacy, and attitude towards school (Gülhan, 2023). Furthermore, parental involvement may increase parent–child interactions at home and in school, which may affect the responsiveness of the parents to the social, emotional, and intellectual needs of their children (Mata et al., 2018). More importantly, parental involvement may contribute to the amelioration and democratization of school (Desforges, 2003), more positive relations between schools and families based upon respect and mutuality, better understanding of a teacher's or parent's role in school, and it may be employed as a tool by teachers to better understand family culture and abilities (Epstein, 2010). All these reasons strongly emphasize the importance of parental involvement for children, parents, and teachers.

Although parental involvement is a highly researched topic in educational studies, yet, parent involvement may not be defined precisely in the existing literature, because the generic definitions and descriptions of its meanings and functions are often vague, referring to parents' multifaceted behaviors at home

and in school (Giannikas & Nikitaki, 2022). Still, it is essential to practitioners and researchers to answer questions that concern its meanings and functions in order to promote all children's learning.

Some researchers avoid a general definition of parental involvement, whereas they focus on specific involvement types (Boonk et al., 2018). For instance, Epstein has not defined parental involvement from a singular perspective, but has classified home- and school-related strategies of involvement into a six-type model of parental involvement. Epstein's model "describes parent–teacher relationships as based on communication and cooperation and parental involvement as malleable depending on the practices of teachers, administrators, other persons, and students" (Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018, p. 32). Based on Epstein's theoretical model of parental involvement, this study identifies parental involvement as those behaviors demonstrated by parents at home and in school settings in order to support the development of their children, both educationally and socially/emotionally (Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018).

Epstein introduces "school, family, and community partnerships" as a better term than "parental involvement" to recognize the importance of sharing responsibility between parents, teachers, and the community in students' learning (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). According to Epstein's model, parental involvement or better, "school, family, and community partnerships," is a multidimensional term, depicted in a six-type framework of involvement (Sanders & Epstein, 2005), each associated with different practices, comprising:

- *Type 1-Parenting*: assist all families to establish supportive home environments for children as students.
- *Type 2-Communicating*: create two-way communication channels between all families and schools about school programs and children's progress in a comprehensible manner.
- *Type 3-Volunteering:* recruit parent help and support for school functions and activities (e.g., organizing activities or celebrations).
- *Type 4-Learning at home*: involve families in children's academic learning at home and home-related activities (e.g., help with homework).
- *Type 5-Decision making*: include parents as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities.
- *Type 6-Collaborating with the community*: identify and integrate community resources and services to support schools, families, and students' learning with a sense of shared responsibility.

Parent responses to varied home–school activities are significantly determined by variables associated with the parent, the child, or the teacher. Researchers have put emphasis on parent perceptions of their roles and their efficacy in the education of children when involved in their children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Specific domains of parents'

self-perceived skills and knowledge, family socioeconomic conditions, as well as specific invitations, demands, and opportunities to be engaged presented either by the child or school may affect parental involvement and practices (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In fact, higher self-efficacy levels on part of the parent are associated with increased classroom participation, more home activities, and fewer negative interactions with school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). Moreover, teacher positive beliefs of parent efficacy in children's learning may also define home–school practices, since teachers act to secure parental involvement according to their perception of parent efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002).

Further, among home–school practices preferred, it seems that homework or regular communication with school tend to be related more with parental involvement (Zaoura & Aubrey, 2010). Poulou and Matsagouras (2007) found that "parent–teacher conferences at school" about parenting and children's behavior were the prominent area of home–school practices in Greece, as well as "parents' invitation into the classroom." On the contrary, activities such as "home–school journal," "family–teacher meetings outside school time," or "home visits" were less preferred by Greek parents.

Compared to the bulk of literature on parental involvement that focuses on parents' involvement, fewer studies have examined the involvement of parents of children with LD, presenting both the parent and teacher perspective, especially in Greece. Therefore, this study makes some important contributions to the investigation, analysis, and clarification of the meaning of "parental involvement" through parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement and practices to support the education of children with LD. Numerous studies, large or small-scaled, examine issues of parental involvement in predetermined educational activities, parent or teacher roles or practices, parent aspirations, as well as the impact of parental involvement upon students' achievements, attitude, or behaviors. In Greece, the existing evidence coming from mixed-method studies, rating simultaneously parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement or practices for inclusive purposes is still limited. The significance of this study is linked with the assumption that if parent and teacher perceptions regarding parental involvement and home–school practices when children with LD are involved can be ascertained, then the findings of this study may be used to ameliorate or introduce new practices in school so that the academic achievement of these children could potentially be increased.

This research, being part of a large-scale, mixed methods study on parental involvement based on Epstein's typology, was conducted to investigate parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement in the education of elementary school children with identified LD. Perceived practices employed by both

parents and teachers to support these children's learning were also explored. Additionally, we examined if certain parent-related sociodemographic characteristics (parent–child relation, education level, marital status, children's age), as well as teacher-related sociodemographic characteristics (general and special education teacher, gender, education level, teaching experience) may differentiate parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement and practices to enhance these children's learning. Specifically, based on Epstein's typology (1995), we explored:

1. How do parents of children with LD and their teachers perceive parental involvement (Types) in the education of these children?
2. What practices do parents and teachers report that they employ to support the education of these children?
3. Are there any differences among parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement, as well as parent and teacher practices, and the above-mentioned parent- and teacher-related sociodemographic characteristics?

Method

Research Design and Procedures

The present study took place between the years of 2018 and 2019, prior to the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. A written permission was acquired from Epstein to use Epstein et al.'s questionnaires, as well as from the Greek Ministry of Education. Directors, consultants, and heads of public elementary schools were informed by mail, phone, or personally by the researchers to obtain permission to solicit parent and teacher participation; 960 letters (500 for parents, 560 for teachers) were sent to 250 elementary schools in different areas of Greece, explaining to them the purpose of the study, soliciting voluntary participation, and affirming confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. The respondents choosing to participate were asked to complete a questionnaire that contained all data needed for this study at a time and place convenient to them. All questionnaires were returned in stamped addressed envelopes (parents, n = 242, 48.4%) (teachers, n = 362, 64.82%), the major part of which was collected by post. The researchers tried to communicate with the parents who did not respond, but without success.

Participants

The sample consisted of 586 participants (151 mothers, 77 fathers, 232 general, and 126 special education teachers) drawn from 120 schools located in urban and suburban areas in regions of Central Greece (Attica included), Peloponnese, and Thessaly. Specific inclusion criteria were set, such as: (1) being

state mainstream schools; (2) having pull-out programs/resource room units for students with LD; (3) the students' LD were identified according to the national identification procedure (Law 3699/2008, in which the KEDASY, an organization attached to the Ministry of Education, has assessed the students' LD and has provided useful guidelines to parents and schools in order to develop an IEP for the student; no other impairment was reported for the children described by their parents and teachers, as well as by the official diagnosis accompanying them); and (4) parents or teachers of children with LD should be willing to participate in this study. Anonymity was kept throughout the process of this research.

The respondent parents were mainly mothers (n = 151, 66.2%), between 41–50 years of age (n = 124, 54.6%), and married (n = 206, 91.2%). All parents reported having at least one child with LD. Table 1 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the participant parents.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Parent Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Mothers		Fathers		Total	
	n = 151	%	n = 77	%	N = 228	%
Age						
20-30 years	4	2.7	1	1.3	5	2.2
31-40 years	67	44.7	21	27.3	88	38.8
41-50 years	74	49.3	50	64.9	124	54.6
51 years of age or more	5	3.3	5	6.5	10	4.4
Education						
Elementary school	10	6.7	3	3.9	13	5.7
Junior High school	12	8.0	13	16.9	25	11.0
Lyceum	81	54.0	28	36.3	109	48.0
University	35	23.3	23	29.9	58	25.6
Master's degree	3	2.0	3	3.9	6	2.7
PhD	-	-	1	1.3	1	0.4
Other	9	6.0	6	7.8	15	6.6
Marital status						
Married	139	93.3	67	87.0	206	91.2
Divorced	9	6.0	10	13.0	19	8.4
Single parent	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.4

As for the teacher respondents, the general education teachers (*n* = 232, 64.8%) participating in this study outnumbered the special education teachers (*n* = 121, 36.2%). The majority of the teachers were female (*n* = 245, 76.1%), less than half of them were between 46–55 years of age (*n* = 152, 45.6%), and some of them had either 21–30 years (*n* = 119, 36.0%) or 11–20 years (*n* = 107, 32.3%) in service. Some teachers reported that there were at least two children with LD or other disability in their class. Table 2 provides further details of the participant teachers' sociodemographic characteristics.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Participant Teachers

	Teachers					
	General Teacher		Special Education Teacher		Total	
Characteristics	*n* = 232	%	*n* = 126	%	*N* = 358	%
Gender						
Male	50	24.9	27	22.3	77	23.9
Female	151	75.1	94	77.7	245	76.1
Age						
25–35 years	53	25.7	23	18.1	76	22.8
36–45 years	59	28.6	40	31.5	99	29.7
46–55 years	90	43.7	62	48.8	152	45.6
56 years and more	4	1.9	2	1.6	6	1.8
Education						
School of Education	61	29.8	27	21.8	88	26.7
University degree	115	56.1	72	58.1	187	56.8
Master's degree	22	10.7	24	19.4	46	14.0
PhD	6	2.9	1	.8	7	2.1
Other	1	0.5	0	.0	1	.3
Years of experience as a teacher						
1–10 years	64	31.1	34	27.2	98	29.6
11–20 years	69	33.5	38	30.4	107	32.3
21–30 years	67	32.5	52	41.6	119	36.0
31 years and more	6	2.9	1	.8	7	2.1

Instrument

The *School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries* (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007) was administered to parents in order to assess their perceptions of parental involvement, as well as their practices, when they are involved in the education of their children with LD. Some demographics were also required at the end of the questionnaire which consisted of five sections, 10 questions, and 90 items. However, in this study, we present data coming from the analyses of parent responses to the following sections:

- *The school's contact with you* examines parent perceptions of parental involvement in line with Epstein's typology, coded on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = well, 4 = never).
- *Your involvement* contains specific research questions about parental involvement behaviors at home or at-school practices. Parents were asked to report the frequency [every day or most days (1) up to never (4)] they were involved in their children's education with Type 2-Comunicating, Type 3-Volunteering, and Type 4-Learning at home involvement practices.

Table 3 presents more detailed information of the parent questionnaire.

Table 3. Sections–Scales of the Parent Questionnaire

Sections–Scales	Parts–Parental Involvement Types
Scale 1. The school's contact with you (15 items)	• Invitations to school (Type 3, Type 5) • Communicate information about child's progress in school (Type 2) • Encourage parent–child interactions on homework (Type 4) • Strengthened connections with community (Type 6)
Scale 2. Your involvement (15 items)	• Parental involvement at school (Type 2, Type 3) • Parental involvement at home (Type 4) • Parental involvement in reading (Type 4) • Parental involvement in math (Type 4) • Parental involvement in science (Type 4) • Monitoring schoolwork (general involvement at home, Type 4)

Also, the *School and Family Partnerships: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in the Elementary and Middle Grades* (Epstein & Salinas, 1993) was administered to teachers. The questionnaire provides information on teacher attitudes about parental involvement, teacher practices to involve families, teacher perceptions of the parental role, some demographics, and open-ended comments. However, in this article, the data presented come from teacher responses, as follows:

- *Question 1* contains two scales that measure teacher perceptions of parental involvement (Type 2-Communicating, Type 3-Volunteering, Type 4-Learning at home, and Type 5-Decision making), coded on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = I totally disagree, 4 = I totally agree).
- *Question 2* contains one scale that measures Type 2-Communicating practices. Teachers should estimate the average (0%, 5%, 10%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 90%, 100%) of Type 2-Communicating practices to reach parents (Most/Fewer).
- *Question 3* contains two scales that measure the use of parents as volunteers either in classrooms or in school (Type 3-Volunteering), offering a fixed group of answer choices to the teacher respondents who are asked to "check all that apply."
- *Question 4* contains four scales that measure what practices of involvement (Type 2-Communicating, Type 3-Vollunteering, Type 4-Learning at home, and Type 5-Decision making) do teachers think that are important for their grade level, coded on a 4-scale Likert (1 = not important, 4 = very important).

Table 4 presents more details of the teacher questionnaire.

Each questionnaire was translated into Greek and pilot tested with 10 parents and 10 teachers, respectively. After minor phrasal adjustments, they were both back translated to ascertain that they captured the meaning of the original questionnaire in its Greek version.

Data Analysis

In both questionnaires, variables were tested for internal reliability (Cronbach's α; see Table 5 and 6). All statistical analyses run with IBM SPSS v.22. Descriptive analyses, the nonparametric test Friedman's Rank (x_f^2), the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality for independent samples, the Mann-Whitney U non-parametric test, Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test, as well as the χ^2 test (for Types with one item) were employed in order to analyze the data coming from the participants' responses.

Table 4. Questions and Scales of the Teacher Questionnaire

Question	Scale	Parental Involvement Activities (Types)
Question 1	Scale 1. Teacher Attitudes About Parental Involvement (6 Items)	Type 2-Communicating Type 3-Volunteering Type 4-Learning at home Type 5-Decision making
	Scale 2. Teacher General Attitudes About Parental Involvement (5 Items)	
Question 2	Scale 3. Teacher's Practices of Contacting Families (8 Items)	Type 2-Communicating
Question 3	Scale 5. How Volunteers Are Involved In Classrooms (8 Items)	Type 3-Volunteering
	Scale 6. How Volunteers Are Involved in School (9 Items)	Type 3-Volunteering
Question 4	Scale 7. Importance To Teacher of Type 2-Communicating Activities (6 Items)	Type 2-Communicating
	Scale 8. Importance to Teacher of Type 3-Volunteering Activities (1 Item)	Type 3-Volunteering
	Scale 9. Importance to Teacher of Type 4-Learning at Home Activities (7 Items)	Type 4-Learning at home
	Scale 10. Importance to Teacher of Type 5-Decision Making Activities (1 Item)	Type 5-Decision making

Table 5. Validity Results of Parent Questionnaire (Cronbach's α)

Sections	Sheldon & Epstein (2007)	Present study
Section 1.		
Part A. The school's contact with you	.81	.90
Section 2. Your involvement	.79	.92

Table 6. Validity Results of Teacher Questionnaire (Cronbach's α)

Teacher Questionnaire		Cronbach's α	
Questions	Scales	Epstein & Salinas (1993)	Present study
Question 1	Teacher attitudes about parental involvement (Types 2, 3, 4, and 5)	.72	.52
	Teacher general attitudes about parental involvement		.52
Question 2	Teacher's practices of contacting families	.69	.54
Question 3	How volunteers are involved in classrooms	.65	.67
	How volunteers are involved in school		
Question 4	Importance to teacher of Type 2 activities	.75	.60
	Importance to teacher of Type 3 activities	-	-
	Importance to teacher of Type 4 activities	.77	.79
	Importance to teacher of Type 5 activities	-	-

Results

The perceptions of parents of children with LD and their teachers' perceptions of parental involvement (Types) in the education of these children

Parents

Descriptive analyses employed calculated the means (M), standard deviation (SD), and the range (min–max) of each Type to determine which one is most/least likely to be endorsed by parent participants. Additionally, the non-parametric test Friedman's Rank (x_f^2) was used to compare between the related means of the involvement Types so as to indicate how they differ. According to the Friedman's Rank test (x_f^2), the analyses show that the difference of Type 1-Parenting (highest mean) with Type 2-Communicating, Type 3-Volunteering, Type 4-Learning at home, Type 5-Decision making, and Type 6-Collaborating with the community is statistically significant [$x_f^2(5) = 292.79$, $p = .000 < .001$ for each Type]. Also, the difference of Type 2 compared to Types 3, 5, and 6 is statistically significant [$x_f^2(3) = 128.29$, $p = .000 < .001$ for each type] as well as with Type 4, compared to Types 3, 5, and 6, where $x_f^2(3)$

= 38.71, p = .000 < .001. As Figure 1 demonstrates, Type 1-Parenting prevails among other Types, whereas Type 3-Volunteering is the least preferred Type (see Table 7), as follows:

- Type 1-Parenting. M = 3.28 (high)
- Type 2-Communicating. M = 2.83
- Type 4-Learning at home. M = 2.66 (higher than the scale's average)
- Type 6-Collaborating with the community. M = 2.31 (value close to the scale's average)
- Type 5-Decision making. M = 2.24 (lower than the scale's average)
- Type 3-Volunteering. M = 2.14.
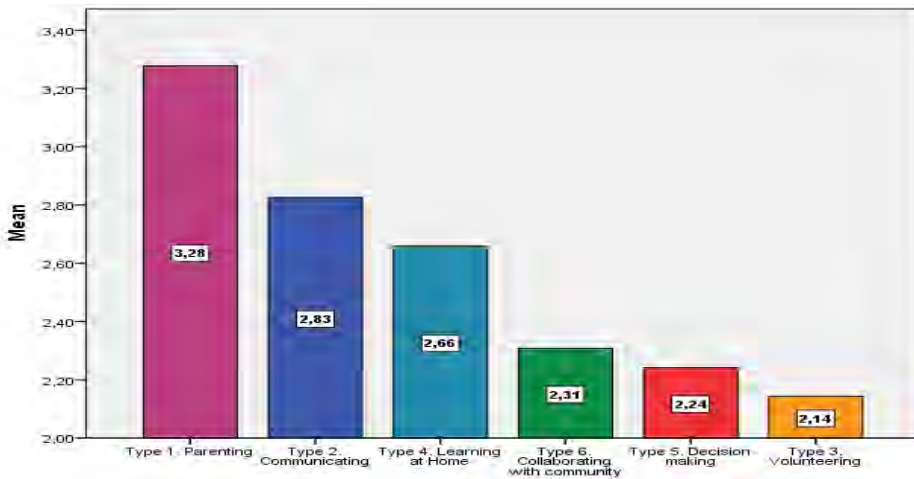
Figure 1. Mean Values of All Types of Parental Involvement

Table 7. Values of Involvement Types According to Parent Participants (N = 257)

Types	M	SD	Range
Type 1-Parenting	3.28	.82	1.00 - 4.00
Type 2-Communicating	2.83	.83	1.00 - 4.00
Type 3-Volunteering	2.14	.82	1.00 - 4.00
Type 4-Learning at home	2.66	1.13	1.00 - 4.00
Type 5-Decision making	2.24	.76	1.00 - 4.00
Type 6-Collaborating with the community	2.31	1.00	1.00 - 4.00

Teachers

All items of the teacher questionnaire (Type 5-Decision making) were tested for internal consistency (Cronbach's α). Descriptive statistics were calculated on each Type, as well as the means (M), standard deviation (SD), and the range

(min–max) to determine which Type is most likely/least likely to be endorsed by teacher participants. Additionally, the non-parametric test Friedman's Rank (x^2_f) was used to compare between the related means of the involvement Types, so as to indicate how they differ. The analyses reveal that Type 5-Decision making prevails among other Types examined, whereas Type 3-Volunteering follows. According to the Friedman's Rank test (x^2_f), the difference (highest value) of Type 5-Decision making with Type 2-Communicating, Type 3-Volunteering, and Type 4-Learning at home is statistically significant [$x^2_f(3)$ = 337.89, p = .000 < .001] (see Figure 2 and Table 8), as follows:

- Type 5-Decision making. M = 2.92 (higher than scale's average)
- Type 3-Volunteering. M = 2.32
- Type 2-Communicating. M = 2.15
- Type 4-Learning at home. M = 2.14 (the lowest value)

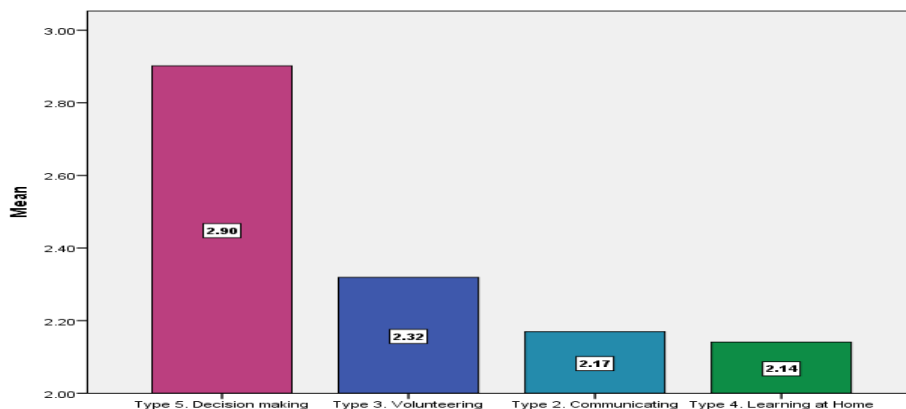Figure 2. Mean Values of Involvement Types According to Teacher Participants

Table 8. Values of Involvement Types According to Teacher Participants (N = 334)

Types	M	SD	Range
Type 2-Communicating	2.15	.72	1.00 - 4.00
Type 3-Volunteering	2.32	.64	1.00 - 4.00
Type 4-Learning at Home	2.14	.58	1.00 - 4.00
Type 5-Decision making	2.92	.37	1.67 - 4.00

As it concerns the variable "Teacher general attitudes about parental involvement" (M = 2.96, Cronbach's α = .522), items such as "parental involvement is important for a good school," and "it's important for student success in school" were higher scored (M = 3.11), whereas items, such as "parent involvement

can help teachers to be more effective with more students" (M = 2.79), and "teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices" (M = 2.78) were ranked with the lowest values.

Practices that parents and teachers employ to support the education of children with LD

Parents

As it concerns parental practices, all items were tested with Cronbach's α for internal consistency. Descriptive statistics were employed to calculate the means (M), standard deviation (SD), and the range (min–max), as well as the Types that are most and least likely to be endorsed by parent participants. Additionally, the non-parametric test Friedman's Rank (x_f^2) was used to compare between the related means of the involvement Types so as to indicate how they differ.

The analyses revealed that Type 4-Learning at Home is the most used practice, compared to Type 3-Volunteering, which is the least preferred one. According to Friedman's Rank test (x_f^2), the difference of Type 3 (lowest mean) with Type 2 and Type 4 is statistically significant [$x_f^2(2)$ = 122.52, p = .000 < .001 for each Type]. Figure 3 and Table 9 demonstrate the most/least reported Types of parental practices, as follows:

- Type 2-Communicating. M = 3.07 (higher than the scale's average)
- Type 3-Volunteering. M = 2.18 (lower than the scale's average)
- Type 4-Learning at home. M = 3.25 (higher than the scale's average)

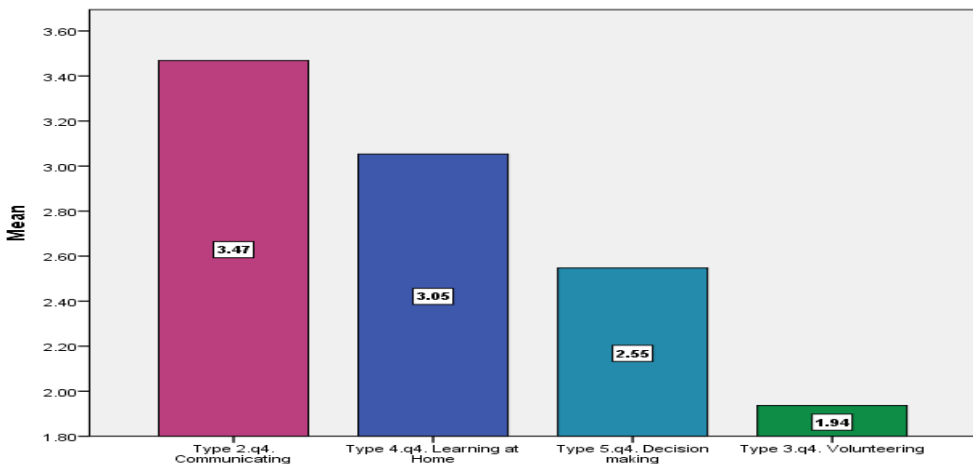Figure 3. Mean Values of the Involvement Practices According to Parent Participants

Table 9. Values of Types of Parental Practices (N = 257)

Types	M	SD	Range
Type 2-Communicating	3.07	.66	1.50 - 4.00
Type 3-Volunteering	2.18	1.04	1.00 - 4.00
Type 5-Decision making	3.25	.56	1.46 - 3.82

Teachers

All items of the teacher questionnaire [Type 2-Communicating (questions 2 & 4), Type 3-Volunteering, Type 4-Learning at home (question 4)], were tested with Cronbach's α for internal consistency. Descriptive statistics were calculated on each of the assessing Type of involvement, as well as the means, standard deviation, and the range (min–max) to determine which Types are most/least likely to be endorsed by the teacher participants. The analyses revealed that Type 2-Communicating (question 4) prevails among other Types examined. Specifically, the Friedman's Rank test (x_f^2) revealed that the difference (highest value) of Type 2 (question 4) with Types 3-Volunteering, Type 4-Learning at home, and Type 5-Decision making (question 4) is statistically significant [x_f^2(3) = 528.49, p = .000 < .001 for all three Types]. The same is valid for the difference between Type 4 (question 4) and Types 3 and 5 (question 4) [x_f^2(2) = 256.08, p = .000 < .001] and Type 5 (question 4) with Type 3 (question 4) [x_f^2(1) = 201.32, p = .000 < .001]. Data coming from the above-mentioned analyses are presented in Figure 4 and Table 10, as follows:

- Type 2-Communicating. M = 3.48 (higher than scale's average)
- Type 4-Learning at home. M = 3.07 (higher than scale's average)
- Type 5-Decision making. M = 2.56 (almost on scale's average)
- Type 3-Volunteering. M = 1.94 (lower than scale's average)

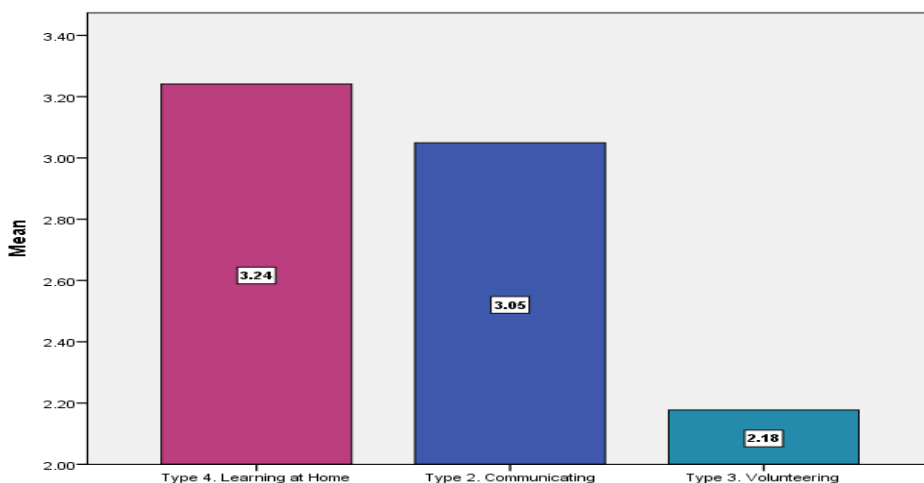Figure 4. Mean Values of Parental Practices According to Teacher Participants

Table 10. Values of Teacher Practices (N = 332)

Types	M	SD	Range
Type 2-Communicating (Question 4)	3.48	.39	2.00 - 4.00
Type 3-Volunteering (Question 4)	1.94	.98	1.00 - 4.00
Type 4-Learning at Home (Question 4)	3.07	.56	1.71 - 4.00
Type 5-Decision making (Question 4)	2.56	.87	1.00 - 4.00

Differences among parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement according to specific sociodemographic characteristics

Parents

The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality for independent samples, employed to calculate the differences among parent perceptions and parent sociodemographics (Type 2-Communicating, Type 3-Volunteering, Type 5-Decision making, and Type 6-Collaborating with the community), showed no normal distribution. Therefore, Mann-Whitney U non-parametric test was used for parent–child relation and parent marital status, whereas Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was used for parent and child age groups and parent education level. For Type 1-Parenting and Type 4-Learning at home (one item each), the χ^2 test was used.

It was revealed that in Type 2-Communicating, there were statistically significant differences, when related with the parent–child relation. Specifically, the fathers (Mdn = 3.17) get higher rates compared to the mothers (Mdn = 2.83, the U criterion value = 4723.00, p = .035 < .05, and the effect size = -0.14; see Table 11).

Table 11. The Involvement Types According to Mothers and Fathers (Mann-Whitney U)

Type	Mothers	Fathers	U	p
	(n = 150)	(n = 77)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Type 2-Communicating	**2.83 (1.40)**	**3.17 (.92)**	**4723.000**	**.035**
Type 3-Volunteering	2.50 (1.00)	2.00 (1.00)	5110.000	.325
Type 5-Decision making	2.00 (1.33)	2.00 (1.00)	5023.000	.276
Type 6-Collaborating with the community	2.00 (1.75)	2.50 (1.50)	5283.000	.452

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Mann-Whitney U test, and the corresponding p-value. The statistically significant differences are noted with bold.

Also, in Type 2-Communicating and Type 5-Decision making, the students' age group differentiated parent perceptions of involvement (Type 2, H (3) = 11.41, p = .010 < .05; Type 5, $\boldsymbol{H}$(3) = 8.89, p = .031 < .05). The post hoc test reveals that the parents of older students present statistically significant lower rates (Type 2-Communicating, Mdn = 2.33; Type 5-Decision making, Mdn = 2.00) than the parents of younger children (Type 2-Communicating, Mdn = 3.17, p = .005 < .01; Type 5-Decision making, Mdn = 2.42, p = .022 < .05; see Table 12).

Table 12. The Involvement Types, Related to the Students' Age (Kruskal-Wallis H)

Type	Up to 8 years	9–10 years	11–12 years	13 years and up	H (3)	p
	(n = 37)	(n = 62)	(n = 76)	(n = 37)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Type 2-Communicating	**3.17 (1.00)**	**3.00 (1.34)**	**2.83 (1.16)**	**2.33 (1.5)**	**11.406**	**.010**
Type 3-Volunteering	2.50 (1.00)	2.00 (1.00)	2.00 (1.00)	2.00 (1.50)	4.450	.217
Type 5-Decision making	**2.42 (1.00)**	**2.33 (1.00)**	**2.00 (1.00)**	**2.00 (0.83)**	**8.887**	**.031**
Type 6-Collaborating with the community	2.50 (1.50)	2.50 (1.25)	2.00 (1.50)	1.50 (1.50)	6.893	.075

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Kruskal-Wallis H test, and the corresponding p-value.

The data revealed that the mothers and the parents of younger children participate more in their children's education with Type 2-Communicating and Type 5-Decision making involvement activities, compared to the fathers and the parents of older children. For items related with Type 1-Parenting and Type 4-Learning at home (categorical variables), the χ^2 test took place, when these Types were compared with sociodemographic variables. No statistically significant differences are observed.

Teachers

The Shapiro-Wilk test employed to calculate the differences among teacher perceptions (Types) and teacher demographics in Type 5-Decision making showed no normal distribution. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was run for gender and the type of teacher, as well as the Kruskal-Wallis test for age groups, education level, and teaching experience. As it concerns Type

2-Communicating, Type 3-Volunteering, and Type 4-Learning at home (one item), the χ^2 test was conducted.

Table 13 presents the statistically significant differences found in Type 5-Decision making according to gender. Specifically, the female teachers (Mdn = 3.00) had lower rates than their male colleagues (Mdn = 3.00, *U* criterion value = 9294.50, *p* = .045 < .05, and effect size = -0.11).

Table 13. Male/Female Teachers' Perceptions in Type 5-Decision Making (Mann-Whitney U)

	Male	Female	*U*	*p*
	(*n* = 84)	(*n* = 257)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Type 5-Decision making	**3.00 (0.5)**	**3.00 (0.33)**	**9294.500**	**.045**

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Mann-Whitney U test, and the corresponding *p*-value. The statistically significant differences are shown with bold.

Also, as it concerns the variable "Teacher general attitudes about parental involvement," teacher education level differentiates teacher perceptions [***H***(2) = 8.40, *p* = .015 < .05]. The post hoc test conducted revealed that teacher graduates of the Teacher Academy had lower rates (Mdn = 3.00) than holders of a Master's degree (Mdn = 3.00, *p* = .013 < .05; see Table 14).

Table 14. "Teacher General Attitudes About Parental Involvement" Variable Related to Teacher Education Level (Kruskal-Wallis H)

Variable	Teacher Academy	University Diploma	Master's or PhD	*H (2)*	*p*
	(*n* = 90)	(*n* = 204)	(*n* = 55)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Teacher general attitudes about parental involvement	**3.00 (.25)**	**3.00 (.40)**	**3.00 (.60)**	**8.402**	**.015**

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Kruskal-Wallis H test, and the corresponding p-value. The statistically significant differences are noted with bold.

The data revealed that teacher gender affected teacher perceptions of parental involvement in Type 5-Decision making among our participants, since female teachers associated less parental involvement with Type 5-Decision making compared to their male colleagues. Also, teacher education level affected teacher general perception of parental involvement, since teacher graduates of the Teacher Academy perceived parental involvement as less important compared to their colleagues that hold a Master's degree.

Differences among parent and teacher practices according to specific sociodemographic characteristics

Parents

The Shapiro-Wilk test employed to calculate the differences between parent practices (Types) and parent demographics (Types 2-Communicating and Type 4-Learning at home) showed no normal distribution. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was used for parent–child relation and marital status, as well as the Kruskal-Wallis test for parent and child age groups, as well as parent education level. For Type 3-Volunteering (one item), the χ^2 test was used.

The analyses revealed statistically significant differences in Type 2-Communicating and Type 4-Learning at home (see Table 15). Specifically, in Type 2, the student's age group differentiated parent practices [H(3) = 12.36, p = .006 < .01]. The post hoc test reveals that the parents of older students present statistically significant lower rates (Mdn = 2.27) than the parents of younger children (Mdn = 3.33, p = .005 < .01), that is, the parents of older students employ less Type 2-Communicating and Type 4-Learning at home involvement practices.

Table 15. Parent Practices Related to Student Age Group (N = 212; Kruskal-Wallis H)

Type	Up to 8 years	9–10 years	11–12 years	13 years and up	H (3)	p
	(n = 37)	(n = 62)	(n = 76)	(n = 37)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Type 2-Communicating	3.33 (1.00)	3.33 (1.00)	3.00 (1.09)	2.67 (1.00)	12.362	.006
Type 4-Learning at Home	3.54 (0.51)	3.57 (0.47)	3.54 (0.65)	3.08 (0.92)	17.095	.001

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Kruskal-Wallis H test, and the corresponding p-value. The statistically significant differences are noted with bold.

In Type 4-Learning at home, when parent perceptions of involvement practices were related with parent–child relation, parent education, as well as the student's age group, statistically significant differences are revealed. Specifically, the fathers (Mdn = 3.25) had lower rates than the mothers (Mdn = 2.54, the U criterion value = 4495.00, p = .004 < .01, and the effect size = -0.19). Additionally, parent education level differentiates parent practices [H(2) = 10.01, p = .007 < .01]. The post hoc test reveals that graduates from compulsory education present statistically significant lower rates (Mdn = 3.12) compared to

graduates from secondary school (Mdn = 3.48, p = .006 < .01), and university (Mdn = 3.54, p = .021 < .05). Also, student age differentiates parent practices of involvement [H(3) = 17.10, p = .001 < .01]. The post hoc test reveals that the parents of older students present statistically significant lower rates (Mdn = 3.08) than parents of other student age groups.

The data suggest that parent gender, education level, and student's age are strongly associated with parent Type 4-Learning at home involvement practices, since the fathers, the less educated parents, as well as the parents with older children all employ less Type 4-Learning at home practices as compared to the children's mothers, higher educated parents, and parents of younger children.

Teachers

As it concerns teacher practices to involve parents in the education of students with LD, the Shapiro-Wilk test employed to calculate the differences between teacher perceptions of parental involvement (Types) related to teacher demographics showed no normal distribution. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was run for teacher gender and type (general/special education), as well as the Kruskal-Wallis test for teacher age group, education level, and teaching experience. In Type 3-Volunteering and Type 5-Decision making (question 4; one item), the χ^2 test was conducted.

It was revealed that the teacher education level differentiated teacher perceptions of parental involvement practices in Type 2-Communicating (question 2) [H(2) = 8.66, p = .013 < .05]. The post hoc test conducted revealed that teacher graduates from tertiary (university undergraduate) education had lower rates (Mdn = 41.88) than their colleagues with a Master's or a PhD degree (Mdn = 49.38, p = .013 < .05). In Type 2 (question 4), male teachers (Mdn = 3.50) had lower rates than their female colleagues (Mdn = 2.50, the U criterion value = 8692.50, p = .010 < .05, and the effect size = -0.14; see Table 16). This means that the male and the less educated teachers, compared to their female and higher educated colleagues, employed less Type 2-Communicating involvement practices.

Similarly, in Type 4-Learning at home (question 4), statistically significant differences were noticed when related with teacher age and education level. Specifically, the teacher age group differentiated teachers' perceptions about parental involvement practices (question 4) [H(3) = 9.39, p = .025 < .05]. The post hoc test conducted revealed that teachers of 36–45 years of age had lower rates (Mdn = 3.00) than teachers 46–55 years of age (Mdn = 3.14, p = .043 < .05; see Table 17). Additionally, the teacher education level differentiated teacher perceptions about parental involvement practices of Type 4-Learning at home (question 4) [H (2) = 10.35, p = .006 < .01]. The post hoc test conducted revealed that teacher graduates of undergraduate higher education had

lower rates (Mdn = 3.00) than the holders of a Master's or PhD degree (Mdn = 3.29, p = .009< .01). This means that the younger and less educated teachers employed less Type 4-Learning at home involvement practices, compared to their elder and higher educated colleagues.

Table 16. Teacher Practices Related to Teacher Education Level (*N* = 349; Kruskal-Wallis H)

Variable	Teacher Academy	University Diploma	Master's or PhD	H (2)	p
	(*n* = 90)	(*n* = 204)	(*n* = 55)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Type 2-Communicating (Question 2)	**45 (20.63)**	**41.88 (21.25)**	**49.38 (16.96)**	**8.656**	**.013**
Type 2-Communicating (Question 4)	3.55 (.33)	3.50 (0.50)	3.50 (.50)	4.165	.125
Type 3-Volunteering (Question 3)	.06 (.12)	.12 (0.18)	.06 (.24)	2.904	.234
Type 4-Learning at Home (Question 4)	**3.14 (0.79)**	**3.00 (0.86)**	**3.29 (.71)**	**10.353**	**.006**

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Kruskal-Wallis H test, and the corresponding p-value. The statistically significant differences are noted with bold.

Table 17. Teacher Practices Related to Teacher Age Groups (*N* = 352; Kruskal-Wallis H)

Type	25–35 years	36–45 years	46–55 years	56 years and up	H (3)	p
	(*n* = 78)	(*n* = 110)	(*n* = 158)	(*n* = 6)		
	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)	Mdn (IQR)		
Type 2-Communicating (Question 2)	41.88 (23.13)	41.88 (18.13)	45.63 (21.71)	46.88 (13.13)	4.949	.176
Type 2-Communicating (Question 4)	3.50 (0.50)	3.50 (0.63)	3.50 (0.33)	3.83 (0.50)	4.366	.225
Type 3-Volunteering (Question 3)	0.12 (0.18)	0.09 (0.18)	0.06 (0.18)	0.09 (0.18)	2.370	.499
Type 4-Learning at Home (Question 4)	**3.00 (0.86)**	**3.00 (0.71)**	**3.14 (0.86)**	**3.57 (1.71)**	**9.386**	**.025**

Notes. The values refer to the Median (Mdn), interquartile range (IQR), Kruskal-Wallis H test, and the corresponding *p*-value. The statistically significant differences are noted with bold.

Discussion

Perceptions of parents of children with LD and their teachers of parental involvement (Types) in the education of these children

In this study, parental involvement in the education of children with LD was studied within Epstein's six-type theoretical model of parental involvement, defined as those home- and school-based behaviors demonstrated by their parents so as to promote their children's social, emotional, and academic development, which is in line with the existing literature on parental involvement (Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018; Teuber at al., 2023). Acknowledging the importance of parent participation in the education of children with LD, both parents and teachers of children with LD were invited to reveal their perceptions about parental involvement because, besides parents, teachers are the closest "important ones" for children and have impact on children's academic achievement, behavior, and the development of their social and emotional skills. Also, teachers and school play an important role in encouraging parental involvement in children's schooling (Yulianti et al., 2022).

The findings of this study align with the existing literature that both parents and teachers facilitate consciously and intentionally the development of academic, social, and emotional competences of children. As it concerns the participant parents, they most closely associate their involvement in the education of their children with LD with Type 1-Parenting. This finding was expected and partially aligns with other studies (Epstein, 2010; Garcia, 2014; Magouirk, 2015). Parenting, being a feature of parental involvement (Epstein, 1995), is highly related with parents' beliefs about their parent role (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995) and about how to support the education of their children with LD (Eleftheriadou & Vlachou, 2020). In fact, parenting and learning at home are considered as home-based parental involvement (Teuber et al., 2023), both associated with the parent role, illustrating all activities in which parents should be engaged so as to ensure educational/emotional support to the child, as well as home–school partnerships (Eleftheriadou & Vlachou, 2020). As part of their role, parents establish a range of "important" activities, for example, Type 4-Learning at home practices (Epstein, 2010; Magouirk, 2015), which are also a feature of home-based parental involvement and, in this study, were highly employed by parents so as to enhance their children's schooling.

It is noteworthy, though, that in this study, teachers considered that Type 5-Decision making was most closely related with parental involvement, which has no precedent in other studies we found. In fact, studies on the involvement of parents with children with disabilities in the education of their children

often indicate the exclusion of parents from decision making as a rather common practice for schools, for example, in IEP meetings, school policies, and so on (Love et al., 2017). However, should parents build a relationship with the teachers, then they may have some input in decision making, determining how to support their children's work or their child's class (Love et al., 2017).

Also, the data revealed that teachers view parental involvement as an important factor for children's education, which aligns with other studies that reported how essential parental involvement is during children's transition from pre-primary to primary school (Besi & Sakellariou, 2023) and from primary to secondary school (Teuber et al., 2023). Specifically, items such as "parental involvement is important for a good school" and "it's important for student success in school" were highly scored. This means that the teachers are open to teacher–parent collaboration, although they rated the item "parental involvement can help teachers to be more effective with more students" with low values. Still, in Greece, there are many steps to be taken in order for effective parent, teacher, and student relations to be established (Besi & Sakellariou, 2023).

Parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement practices in the education of student with LD

In the pandemic situation, learning at home and communicating were the main practices employed by both parents and teachers in the education of all children (Carrión-Martinez et al., 2021; Knopik et al., 2021). In this study, the teachers indicated Type 2-Communicating practices as highly employed to involve parents of children with LD, which agrees with the literature (Savva & Symeou, 2019). On the contrary, Type 4-Learning at home practice was mostly used by the respondent parents, especially of the parents of younger children with LD. This evidence aligns with other studies about learning at home in the early years of children's schooling (Magouirk, 2015). It may be related with a parent's perceptions of his/her role in the education of his/her child (Eleftheriadou & Vlachou, 2020). Also, it seems that the student's age is a determinant factor for parent's involvement and practices in their children's education, which is also supported by other research on parental involvement (Besi & Sakellariou, 2023; Magouirk, 2015; Teuber et al., 2023).

Differences among parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement, as well as parent and teacher practices, and parent- and teacher-related sociodemographic characteristics

Regarding the differences among parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement and practices related with parent or teacher sociodemographic characteristics, gender as well as education level seem to be related with parental

involvement and practices for both parents and teachers. In fact, the mothers and the female teachers associate more parental involvement with communication and learning at home than the fathers and male teachers, which is affirmed by the existing literature (Erdener, 2013; Garcia, 2014). Further, in parental involvement literature, the term "parent" disguises the gender of the person that, in main, undertakes the responsibility for children's schooling, that is, the mothers (Laluvein, 2007). It is most likely that the mothers get more involved in their children's education than the fathers, due to the stereotypes associated with the parental role in children's schooling (Eleftheriadou & Vlachou, 2020).

Suggestions

This study intended to examine parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement, as well as parent and teacher practices, when involved in the education of children with LD. It was based on Epstein's model of parental involvement, employing measures of parental involvement from Epstein's questionnaires for parents and teachers in general and special education. Since in recent decades there has been a major concern around school–family relations in line with children's development and education, as well as parental involvement in children's schooling being considered as one of the most prominent issues for educational research and politics worldwide due to its positive outcomes for students, schools, and families (Savva & Symeou, 2019), the findings of this study should benefit schools, teachers, parents, and administrators. However, future research would greatly benefit from quantitative data compared with experimental data within a multi-method framework. Also, researchers should take into account parental involvement as a broad construct and should measure all its different dimensions separately and in-depth, taking into account inclusion of children with disabilities.

To promote parental involvement in school means that teachers accept parent membership as equal in educational communities of practice. Strengthening active and effective parental involvement in educational systems is pivotal if aiming at achieving students' full potential (Savva & Symeou, 2019; Ulferts, 2020) throughout their learning pathways. All persons, including students with disabilities as well as their parents, have the claim to the right in education on the basis of equal opportunities (Graham, 2020). However, during the pandemic, parents of children with disabilities, compared to other student groups, were at a disadvantage in terms of education and support due to limited access of educational resources (Knopik et al., 2021), as well as to the lack of knowledge of appropriate pedagogies on behalf of the school or the parent (Carrión-Martinez et al., 2021) required for schooling at home. Therefore, as

the findings of this study suggest, it is imperative that policymakers as well as universities should plan effective teacher in-service education so as to prepare teachers for implementing successful parent involvement practices in all times, placing great emphasis on Type 2-Communicting and Type 5-Decision making parental involvement activities.

Also, policymakers should take into account that the LD population is the largest at-risk student population in Greek schools (Padeliadu & Botsas, 2007); however, there is a lot to be done so as to enhance their learning. The present study places forward the issue of increased parent training, for example, in parent schools, besides teacher training, since in this study the parent–teacher perceptions about parental involvement and practices in the education of students with LD demonstrated that it is pivotal to reconsider and introduce new school practices in a period that demands of policymakers, universities, practitioners, teachers, and parents to promote changes in pedagogy and in educational communities, so as to promote successful home–school partnerships for all students.

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