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**Phumuzani Mpofu; Simangele Mayisela**

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# A Comprehensive parenting framework for post-apartheid South Africa: Informing effective parenting practices

[1*]Phumuzani Mpofu and [2]Simangele Mayisela
[1,2]Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
[1*]Primary author: mpofup89@gmail.com

***Abstract*—** Parenting is a complex and demanding responsibility that requires careful execution from those involved. The study is grounded in cultural historical activity theory, which provides a lens through which to analyse the interactions and dynamics within South African parenting practices. It adopted a qualitative research approach through a transformative paradigm. Participatory Action Learning and Action Research design were employed to gather in-depth data from participants. Thirty participants identified key phases essential to a comprehensive parenting framework for South Africa. Data was generated using focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. These phases include training parents on effective parenting practices, educating children about their constitutional rights and responsibilities, adopting a multidisciplinary approach to parenting, establishing clear standards for institutions where children are placed, creating vibrant care and aftercare centres, revising local curricula to incorporate local cultural values, and providing free, well-resourced mental health facilities in all communities, with blended approaches that include traditional practices. The study recommends the adoption of a comprehensive parenting framework for post-apartheid South Africa to strengthen parenting practices within South African communities.
***Keywords***: Comprehensive framework, Multidisciplinary approach, Parenting, Transformative

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## I. INTRODUCTION

PARENTING is a fundamental activity expected to be carried out by parents and society. There is a controversial discourse related to the advantages and disadvantages of parenting worldwide. It can build or destroy communities. For example, Byrne et al. (2013) could disagree on the best parenting practices. Thus, Rohmalimna et al. (2022) argue that parents play a pivotal role in children's self-concept development. Rohmalimna et al. (2022) further argued that children who receive positive treatment are more likely to develop a positive self-concept, while those who do not are less likely to do so. Parents are, therefore, expected to guide and advise their children when they make mistakes, helping them understand the nature of the mistakes and how to correct them.

A negative self-concept arises from poor self-adjustment, self-doubt, a fear of failure, and a reluctance to make decisions. This can occur when parents or caregivers are overly autocratic (Mpofu & Tfwala, 2022). Parents who are excessively controlling can prevent their children from exploring the world independently, thereby hindering their growth and leaving them with self-doubt. According to Bristow (2023), children raised by too-controlling parents are cotton wool kids, and their parents are helicopters. This creates a 'double bind' in parenting culture, where parents face criticism for adhering to the demands of intensive parenting and rejecting them (Bristow, 2023). Lee (2023), on the other hand, argues that parenting requires acquired or learned skills and should be guided by professional expertise rather than relying solely on familial or community influences in the upbringing of children.

Garcia et al. (2018) argue that parenting styles play a significant role in shaping children's behaviours, and that families can actively prevent maladaptive behaviours through their parenting choices. They identify four distinct parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful. The authoritarian style is characterised by strict rules and a lack of flexibility, with little room for children to express their opinions or concerns. In contrast, the authoritative style strikes a balanced approach, offering guidance and support while encouraging independence. The permissive style allows children considerable freedom, with few rules or restrictions. In contrast, the neglectful style involves a lack of parental involvement, showing little concern for the child's needs or well-being.

In their study on raising children with antisocial behaviours in Spain, Garcia et al. (2018) examined these four parenting styles and their impact on child development. Their findings indicated that children raised under indulgent or permissive and authoritative parenting styles tended to exhibit more positive outcomes, such as higher self-esteem, better psychosocial development, and lower levels of emotional maladjustment (Garcia et al., 2018). In contrast, children raised with neglectful or authoritarian parenting styles were more likely to display negative developmental outcomes (Lanjeker et al., 2022; Candelanza et al., 2021).

In South Africa, some parents often face challenges in selecting the most effective parenting style for their children. These difficulties may stem from a lack of understanding of the different styles or being influenced by their upbringing and past experiences. Brooks (2023) studied the impact of parenting, focusing on resilience and emphasising that parents play a crucial role in their overall development. Similarly, scholars highlighted that parents have limited influence on children's intelligence (Brooks, 2023). Brooks (2023) further argued that for parents to instill positive values in their children, they must first understand them.

The literature reviewed highlights the critical role that parenting plays in child development. Parenting is evolving like any other societal phenomenon, so parents and caregivers must adapt to these changing dynamics. This study aims to develop a comprehensive framework to guide and inform parenting practices in post-apartheid South Africa. As

families become more individualistic and young parents emerge without adequate mentorship from experienced caregivers, this model presents an ideal solution to support and guide these parents. The framework seeks to promote effective parenting practices that are mindful of the unique challenges and opportunities of the current era. South Africa, with its diverse, multicultural population, high levels of socioeconomic inequality, and a complex social fabric shaped by the legacies of apartheid, presents a unique context for parenting. These dynamics profoundly impact child development, family structures, and parenting styles. Modernisation has transformed traditional family setups, and the once-strong communal support system, where it was said that "it takes a village to raise a child," is no longer as prevalent. Today, parenting often falls more heavily on individual families, making the need for a robust, adaptive framework even more urgent.

This framework will provide guidance that is sensitive to the socio-cultural, political, and economic context of South Africa. The framework will consider the role of extended families, community support networks, and the intersection of traditional and modern parenting approaches. We aim to explore how we can blend positive practices from the past with contemporary parenting methods that our participants believe align with our cultural values. Our framework will incorporate positive discipline, mental health awareness, gender equality, and nurturing resilience in children. By combining evidence-based practices with local cultural norms and needs, the framework aims to equip parents with the tools necessary to raise children who can thrive in a rapidly changing world. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the well-being of children and families, contributing to the broader societal objective of building a stronger, more equitable South Africa.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Parenting models/frameworks are many. Each framework focuses on a particular aspect of children. Epstein's (2007) model of parental involvement in children's learning is one parenting model. This model has six parental involvement topologies: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration (Newman. et al., 2019). This model only focused on parental involvement in the education and behaviour of the children at school and home. This model effectively ensures parents are part of their children's learning process. Salac and Florida (2022) posit that children perform better in school when their parents are actively involved in their education. Parental engagement significantly impacts students' academic success, home and school behaviour, safety and social interactions, the relationship between parents and the school, communication between parents and children, and financial support. The study by Bower and Griffin (2018) noted that this model is only effective with rich families. They found it difficult to involve poor and less educated parents.

The other models of parenting are the cultural models of parenting. These models see parenting as a cultural activity (Lamn & Keller, 2007). They are cognisant that people have different cultures, and their cultures determine the way they raise their children. Cultural parenting models consist of common practices and beliefs focused on achieving wider socialisation objectives. Socialisation goals primarily involve two key dimensions: agency, which ranges from autonomy to heteronomy, and interpersonal distance, which spans relatedness to separateness. Kag˘itçibas¸i (1996) identified three cultural models based on these dimensions. The independence model is characterised by emotional separateness and economic autonomy. In this model, individuals are seen as unique, separate from others, and defined by stable traits and attributes. Socialisation goals emphasise self-confidence and competitiveness. This model is most common in Western industrialised and post-industrialised societies, particularly among urban, educated families.

The cultural interdependence model emphasises emotional (relatedness) and economic (heteronomy) interdependence. In this model, the individual is primarily viewed as an integral part of a group, particularly the family. Socialisation within this framework prioritises obedience, respect, and loyalty to older family members, fostering the stability and harmonious functioning of the hierarchical social system. This interdependent model is common in traditional rural, subsistence-based families (Lamn & Keller, 2007). In contrast, the model of autonomous relatedness combines emotional interdependence with economic independence. It emphasises the development of autonomy while also encouraging integration within the family. Socialisation goals in this model value personal independence and a strong sense of belonging. This model is characteristic of urban, educated middle-class families in societies with an interrelated cultural heritage.

The other model of parenting is the ecological model of parenting in battered women. The model looks at how battered women can raise children under those traumatic conditions (Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2018). It looks at how children raised under such conditions survive. Studies done by people like Albert Bandura have shown that children who grow up witnessing violence are likely to be violent as adults. Some may develop post-traumatic stress disorder. Another theory is Jay Belsky's process of parenting model, published in 1984. The core idea of this model is that parenting is shaped by variables, including the traits of the parent, the child, and the surrounding social environment (Taraban & Shaw, 2018). The models we discussed above do not address the model we are developing. Our model is contextualised and addresses parenting challenges observed in South Africa. In its outlook, it looks at the holistic development of children.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employed the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which Levy Vygotsky developed in the 1920s–1930s. CHAT is a framework rooted in the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and further developed by his colleagues, including Alexei Leontiev and Yrjö Engeström. It emphasises the social and cultural contexts where human activity occurs, highlighting the interaction between individuals, tools, and their environments. CHAT views human activity as a collective, goal-directed process mediated by artifacts (such as language, technology, and other tools). This theory explores how cultural, historical, and social factors shape individual and group behaviour, focusing on learning, development, and transforming practices over time.

CHAT helped us to analyse the interactions and dynamics within parenting practices in South African cultural contexts. CHAT focuses on understanding human activities in social, cultural, and historical contexts. It helps highlight how tools, rules, division of labour, and community affect practices and outcomes (Igira & Gregory,2009). In this study, the subjects are the parents or caregivers who engage in the activity of parenting, and the object is the goal of parenting; in this case, it includes child development, well-being, and socialisation of children in a way that reflects the values and needs of South African society. The rules are the resources or strategies parents use to achieve their goals. These may include cultural norms, support systems, and parenting practices.

On the other hand, rules include cultural norms and societal expectations that govern parenting in South Africa. For example, children are expected to respect their elders. It also contains methods used to discipline children. In this study, the community is the broader social context, including family, local community, extended family, and society. We still believe that it takes the whole village to raise a child. Division of labour is the role that family and community play in parenting.

In the historical context, South Africa has a diverse culture. Things we will consider in this study when applying CHAT are how historical factors such as apartheid, migration, and post-apartheid socioeconomic shifts have shaped parenting styles and values. The framework would take into cognisance different cultural groups. Contradictions will be on

traditional and modern parenting practices, rural and urban parenting styles, parental expectations and children's behaviours in a globalised world. This study aimed to develop a comprehensive parenting framework tailored to South Africa's unique cultural context.

## IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study develops a parenting framework for South African communities. It further identifies strategies for promoting best parenting practices in South Africa, addressing key cultural, social, and economic factors that influence parenting. It determines the key stakeholders who should be involved in developing a theory for best parenting practices in South Africa, justifying the selection of participants based on their expertise and relevance to the topic.

## V. METHODS

**Research paradigm**

The study adopted a transformative paradigm, which was considered particularly fitting for this research as it seeks to empower marginalised or oppressed individuals (Mertens, 2007). In this context, both parents and children are viewed as potential sources of oppression or marginalisation. The study recognises that, in some cases, children may oppress their parents, while in other cases, parents may be oppressing their children. This approach aims to uncover and address these power dynamics, ultimately fostering emancipation for both parties. The transformative paradigm effectively tackles societal inequality and injustice by employing culturally sensitive approaches.

**Research approach**

A qualitative approach was used in this study. We adopted this approach because it allows both internal and external generalisation of results (Maxwell, 2021). Although the data was generated in Johannesburg, this study's findings can be generalised to rural and urban areas across South Africa. This is because Johannesburg is a diverse, multicultural city home to people from nearly all provinces of South Africa and various countries, making it a representative sample of the broader population.

**Research design**

This study adopted the Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) to produce an inclusive framework. PALAR is a dynamic, cooperative, and inclusive approach to addressing complex issues and fostering sustainable professional, organisational, and community growth (Wood, 2019). PALAR believes that something for us without us is not for us. For that reason, in developing this model, we in cluded many stakeholders involved in parenting, including young adults. All stakeholders played a key role in developing the model, actively contributing their input on how the framework should be structured.

**Participants**

Thirty participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which enabled us to intentionally choose individuals who provided the specific information needed for the study (Andrade, 2020). Our sample consisted of three groups. The first group included ten young adults, five females and five males, and their ages ranged between 18 and 25. The second group comprised ten parents, five females and five males between 30 and 70. The final group consisted of ten professionals: two teachers, two psychologists, two social workers, two religious leaders, and two police officers, aged between 30 and 65.

**Data collection instruments**

*Semi-structured interviews*

This study gathered data through one-on-one semi-structured interviews with professionals. One-on-one interviews enabled us to get rich information from the participants. We were able to probe the participants to get more clarity (Saarijärvi & Bratt 2021). All our questions were open-ended.

*Focus group discussions*

This study used focus group discussions with parents and young adults because focus groups can generate data and insights through group interactions that might not emerge as clearly in one-on-one interviews (Marques et al., 2021). In a focus group discussion, participants can build on each other's ideas, helping to raise valuable points and develop them further—something that is less likely to occur in a one-on-one interview. In this study, parents were asked about their current parenting approaches, while young adults reflected on how they were parented. Both groups were invited to suggest what they consider best parenting practices.

**Data analysis**

The data generated from this study were analysed thematically, utilising thematic analysis for its flexibility and adaptability in uncovering patterns and insights (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). We began by familiarising ourselves with the interview transcripts. Next, we generated initial codes based on recurring ideas and patterns. These codes were then organised into broader categories to identify emerging themes. We aimed to move from specific codes to overarching themes that captured meaningful concepts within the data. Finally, we refined these themes to ensure clarity, coherence, and relevance.

**Ethical considerations**

We observed all ethical considerations. Before collecting data, we applied to the university ethics committee that issued us an ethics certificate (PROTOCOL NUMBER: H24/01/23). We used this certificate for the National Police Commissioner, as some of our participants were police officers. The Commissioner General permitted us to interview the selected officers. Participation in the study was voluntary, and we ensured that the nature of the study was fully explained to the participants, along with their rights to participate. The collected data was securely stored on a computer protected by a strong password to ensure privacy and prevent unauthorised access.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Changing parents' mindsets from the Apartheid era**

Participants felt that parents are victims of their socialisation. Most parents find it difficult to abandon the use of corporal punishment because their parents used corporal punishment to raise them. They still believe it was an effective method of parenting. Some participants had this to say.

*"The parents that lived during apartheid era should heal from the trauma that they experienced during that era so that they do not transfer the anger to their children"* (Social Worker: SW1)

*"Parents' mindsets need to be changed; once they change, many things will change"* (Religious Leader: RL1).

The sentiments expressed by participants align with the findings of Walker et al. (2018), who argue that the use of corporal punishment by parents is often linked to their own experiences with corporal punishment as a form of discipline during their upbringing. Walker et al. (2018) further noted that if mothers use CP, it is likely to be copied by future parents as a parenting strategy.

**Equipping parents with the best parenting skills that blend traditional and modern parenting practices**

Participants expressed that modernisation has deprived African women of the opportunity to learn parenting skills from their mothers or other older family members. They pointed out that young mothers living in rented apartments or rooms in the city often do so without the guidance of an experienced family member. As a result, they are left to navigate parenting through trial and error, which can lead to problematic outcomes in some cases.

*"Most parents are young and do not know about parenting. Young parents should be educated on being parents. l was taught by my mother and my sisters to be a good parent. The tradition of young parents being mentored by seniors before assuming the duties of being parents must be restored. Both parents should show interest in the growth of their children" (*Religious Leader: RL1).

*Empowerment programmes should be conducted in positive parenting and responsibilities and should be done both to parents and children. Empower parents with parental skills such as authoritative and democratic styles.*

*"Parents must be taught how to use positive discipline so that there is no discord between what is happening at school and home"* (Focus Group Discussion Parents: FGD PA).

*Empowerment programmes should be conducted in positive parenting and responsibilities and should be done both to parents and children. Empower parents with parental skills such as authoritative and democratic styles.*

It is evident that many parents, particularly young ones, may lack essential parenting skills. For effective parenting, all parents must be equipped with modern and traditional parenting practices that are appropriate and relevant to South African communities. This aligns with the findings of Leijten et al. (2022), who explored effective parenting programmes that can be taught to parents. Their research highlighted that parents who receive guidance and training in various aspects of child-rearing become more competent and effective in their roles. Similarly, Choi et al. (2017) conducted a study on parents participating in a co-parenting programme and found that it significantly enhanced their co-parenting knowledge and skills. Specifically, parents improved their ability to support their children's development in age-appropriate ways, strengthen communication, and create effective parenting plans. Additionally, when comparing different groups, the study revealed that parents of infants and toddlers gained the most from the programme. Improving parenting skills is essential, and CHAT recognises these skills as vital tools for effective parenting.

**Encouraging positive coparenting for parents who are divorced or separated**

Co-parenting is the joint efforts of the adults involved in a child's care and upbringing (Nunes et al., 2021). Participants highlighted the widespread prevalence of divorce and the increasing number of children born outside of marriage. In many instances, parents become embroiled in conflicts over custody, with many unwilling to provide adequate support for their children. Often, these disputes are played out through the children, which can lead to emotional distress. As a result, some children develop conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is crucial for separated or divorced parents to prioritise peaceful co-parenting, setting aside personal conflicts for the well-being of their children. This aligns with CHAT, emphasising the importance of raising children as a community. This is what some participants said.

*All parents separated or not, should think of rationale in the children's interest* (Religious Leader: RL1).

"*Making parents understand that parenting should not be 100% delegated* (Psychologist: Psychologist: PSY1).

"*Parenting should be intentional; spell out the values you want from your children"* (Psychologist: PSY1).

As mentioned earlier, co-parenting has become inevitable in modern family dynamics. Society must recognise and embrace this shift, particularly given the increasing marital challenges and divorce rates. Choi and Becher (2019) emphasised that supportive coparenting plays a crucial protective factor in promoting positive child development and behavioural outcomes. Similarly, Deschênes et al. (2023) highlighted the significance of family alliance, defined as the quality of mother-father-child interactions, in fostering a child's socioemotional development. These studies underscore the vital role that coparenting plays in shaping children's well-being and emotional growth.

**Adopting a multidisciplinary approach to parenting**Participants emphasised that parenting should not be a solitary endeavour. The concept of Ubuntu needs to be revived, where it takes the whole village to raise a child. In traditional societies, there were no orphans because children were collectively cared for and nurtured by the community. Some excerpts supporting the above notion are captured below.

"*Reviving the involvement of extended family in raising children"* (Psychologist: PSY1).

"*Institutions like schools and churches must play a pivotal role in raising the children"* (Social Worker: SW1),

*"Parenting must be a multidisciplinary activity"* (Police Officer: P1).

*"We need to restore Ubuntu in our communities"* (Police Officer: P2)

Another recommended method of parenting was the multidisciplinary approach. Participants believed that children would greatly benefit from being raised collaboratively. They emphasised the importance of parents, family members, community members, and professionals, including teachers, police officers, social workers, church leaders, psychologists, politicians, and traditional leaders, working together for the child's well-being. This approach, they argued, would contribute to raising well-rounded and well-supported children.

**Parents being good role models in front of their children**

It is the responsibility of every parent to ensure their behaviours in front of their children are appropriate. Unfortunately, some parents today engage in drug abuse, sexual activity, or conflicts in front of their children. These behaviours are harmful and unsuitable for young minds. Parents are strongly encouraged to refrain from such actions and create a positive, respectful environment for their children.

"*Parents should be good role models and speak everything to their children"* (Psychologist: PSY1).

"*Parents must be good role models to their children because behaviour is learned"* (Social Worker: SW1)**.**

*"We should know and respect the order of the family, e.g. the father is the head of the house, then the mother, then the children*" (Police Officer: P2).

Albert Bandura supports the above assertions, who argue that behaviour is learned. His theory suggests that individuals can learn new information and behaviours by observing others, receiving reinforcement, and modelling their actions (Ilmiani et al., 2021).

**Teaching children their rights and respect.**

Our participants expressed frustration with how children are interpreting their constitutional rights, feeling that these rights are being abused. Parents shared a sense of imprisonment, believing these rights have made it increasingly difficult for them to discipline their children. They feel that children now operate as if they are above the law. While participants acknowledged the positive aspects of children's rights, they lamented how children often misuse them. Below are some of the quotes from participants

"*Children should be taught what discipline and respect means"* (Police Officer: P2).

*Educating parents and children on children's rights to avoid misuse of these rights. Professionals like social workers, psychologists, and police officers should have outreach programmes to schools and communities focusing on good behaviours and teaching communities about children's rights.* (Police Officer: P1).

*The children's rights should not violate the rights of parents, teachers, or adults"* (Psychologist: PSY 2).

"*Re-visiting some of the children's constitutional rights ushered in after apartheid"* (Police Officer: P1).

*"Teaching children their rights so that they can follow them responsibly"* (P1).

"*Introduction of a subject or a course on how children should behave in respecting adults"* (Police Officer: P1).

"*Inculcate good values in children whilst they are still young. Parents need to be hands-on all the time*" (Focus Group Discussion Parents: FGD PA).

"*Children must be taught these rights at an elementary age so they do not misuse them"* (Focus Group Discussion Parents: FGD PA).

Mpofu and Machingauta (2024) found that the excessive focus on child rights and overprotection has given rise to a new trend of children ignoring authority and rules. Having these rights taught to children and parents will help both parties understand and apply them correctly.

**Reducing outside influence**

The participants also noted that exposure to harmful content through television and social media platforms undermines effective parenting practices. Social media exposes children to inappropriate material at an increasingly young age, where they may encounter harmful behaviours such as drug abuse, violence, prostitution, cyberbullying, pornographic material, and trafficking.

*We need to reduce influence from outside by delaying our children's exposure to harmful content from televisions and social media"* (Police Officer:

P2).

While technology offers numerous benefits in connecting parents with their children, it can also harm young, vulnerable users if left unchecked. Valkenburg et al. (2022) highlight that social media use can significantly impact the mental health of children, particularly teenagers. Similarly, Elsayed (2021) emphasises that social media negatively influences children's social identity, especially in areas like achievement, self-regulation, social closure, and personal dispersion. She advocates for a collective effort from families, schools, and other institutions to safeguard children from these risks.

**Establishing vibrant care centres and aftercare centres**

Unlike during the apartheid era when most mothers stayed home, today's parents are increasingly part of the workforce. This shift has led many families to hire domestic workers, but unfortunately, these caregivers are often not reliable. Maids tend to have high turnover rates, and children are frequently cared for by various individuals. This situation can contribute to a sense of mistrust, as highlighted by Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. Considering this, participants suggested that the government should establish daycare centres, aftercare programmes, and preschools. These centres, particularly those privately owned, should be regulated to ensure quality. The infrastructure and staff must meet high standards so that children can receive the best possible care and development.

"*Government should establish vibrant day care centres/pre-schools or ECD centres throughout the county*" (Focus Group Discussion Parents: FGD PA).

*Use Aftercare centres instead of maids as caregivers"* (Focus Group Discussion Parents FGD PA)

Sending children to regulated child development centers can help prevent negative outcomes resulting from poor parenting practices, such as those stemming from housemaids or immature and incapacitated parents. Alam et al. (2022) argue that inadequate social-emotional development in children is often linked to domestic hostility and mothers' experiences of functional difficulties.

Similarly, Sk (2022) emphasises that the early years of a child's life are crucial for development and lay the foundation for the rest of their lifespan. This underscores the importance of early childhood development centres, which should be a priority for the South African government. Unfortunately, many of these centres remain unregulated. However, the government is beginning to take steps to address this issue and introduce necessary regulations.

**Revising local curriculum to include local culture**

Some parents felt our curriculum is Eurocentric and is not promoting our local cultures. They suggested that our curriculum be revised to encourage our local cultures.

*"We need to revise our curriculum in schools to promote local cultures. From foreign cultures, we need to include what we think is important to own values"* (FGD PA).

**Parental involvement in the education of the children**

Participants emphasised that effective parenting requires active involvement in their children's education. They believe education plays a crucial role in shaping children's futures by opening doors to well-paying job opportunities. It was argued that when parents engage in their children's education, the children are more likely to recognise its value and importance.

"*Promoting parental involvement in the education of our children, teachers should not only contact us when our children are misbehaving"* (Focus Group Discussion Parents: FGD PA).

The suggestions provided by parents align with the findings of Naite (2021) regarding the impact of parental involvement on children's academic achievement. Naite (2021) discovered that students with highly engaged parents performed better academically and achieved higher test scores across all subjects compared to those whose parents were less involved. Based on these findings, Naite (2021) recommended that parents increase their awareness of the importance of supporting their children's education through regular school visits and active participation in their learning. Furthermore, it was emphasised that parents, as their children's first teachers, should actively participate in their education at school and at home.

**Mpofu and Mayisela comprehensive parenting framework for South Africa**

Mpofu and Mayisela developed a comprehensive parenting framework based on the data generated by participants. This framework is structured as a step-by-step guide and comprises seven distinct phases.

Phase 1: Training Parents on Best Parenting Practices

Phase 2: Training Children on their Constitutional rights and their responsibilities.

Phase 3: Adopting a Multidisciplinary Approach to Parenting (parents, teachers, social workers, psychologists, religious leaders, family members, siblings, traditional leaders, community, politicians)

Phase 4 Setting standards governing institutions where children are placed (Government agencies, legislature)

Phase 5: Establishing Vibrant Care Centres and Aftercare Centres

Phase 6: Revising Local Curriculum to Include Local Culture (teaching children survival skills)

Phase 7: Provision of free well, resourced mental health facilities in all communities (blended approaches that will include traditional practices)

**Phase 1 Training parents on best parenting practices**

Effective parenting begins with parents being well-informed about the best practices. This model suggests equipping parents with proven strategies is essential for successful parenting. A study by Bunting (2004) found that parenting programmes can significantly impact several areas, such as improved child behaviour, enhanced maternal self-esteem and relationship dynamics, better mother-child interactions, and reduced maternal depression and stress. These outcomes highlight the value of providing parents with the knowledge and resources to support their children's development and well-being. Similarly, a study by Dore et al. (1999) found that referring parents to a parenting programme is a common response when children are identified as being at risk of abuse or mistreatment. Earnes et al. (2010) found that parent training is the most effective intervention for treating conduct disorder in children.

**Phase 2: Training children on their constitutional rights and their responsibilities**

Participants emphasised the importance of teaching children about their constitutional rights and responsibilities. They believe such education helps children understand their role in society, promotes respect for the law, and encourages active, informed citizenship. By learning about their rights and responsibilities, children are empowered to make thoughtful decisions, respect the rights of others, and appreciate the principles of democracy and justice. This knowledge also fosters a sense of civic duty, helping children grow into responsible, engaged adults who contribute positively to their communities. Another crucial area in which children should receive training is the responsible use of technology. They must understand both the benefits and potential risks, particularly regarding social media, which can expose them to harmful content. Children should learn to navigate the digital world safely, recognising that their online actions can have real-life consequences. Additionally, they must understand that parents have the right and responsibility to monitor their technology use to ensure their well-being and protect them from online dangers.

**Phase 3: Adopting a multidisciplinary approach to parenting**

Participants emphasised the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to parenting, comparing it to the traditional saying that "it takes a village to raise a child." They noted that, in the past, orphans were less visible during the apartheid era. Raising a well-rounded child requires the involvement of professionals, family members, traditional leaders, and religious figures. However, participants also expressed concerns about adults' declining moral values today. As a result, they suggested that while this comprehensive approach to parenting is

valuable, it should be applied with caution and care.

**Phase 4: Setting standards governing institutions where children are placed**

In Phase 4, setting standards for institutions where children are placed typically involves government agencies and the legislature establishing clear, legally binding guidelines to ensure children's safety, well-being, and rights. These standards can cover aspects like the quality of care, staff qualifications, safety protocols, and the living conditions of institutions like foster homes, group homes, and juvenile detention centres. By setting these standards, the government ensures that all children in care are treated with respect and dignity, and that institutions are regularly monitored for compliance.

**Phase 5: Establishing Vibrant Care Centres and Aftercare Centres** Care centres have shifted from being a luxury to a necessity. With both parents working, these centres are essential for looking after children during the day. Maids have become unreliable, often leaving unexpectedly and parents in a tough spot. Daycare and aftercare centres are now the most viable alternative. To truly support parents, these centres must be dynamic and well-equipped. A strong foundation in infrastructure and skilled staff is crucial to ensuring the safety and well-being of our children.

**Phase 6: Revising local curriculum to include local culture (Teaching children survival skills)** Participants expressed the need for a curriculum revision incorporating local cultural survival skills, traditions, languages, and practices. They highlighted that some parenting challenges stem from neglecting our cultural norms and values. The curriculum, they observed, largely promotes Western, individualistic parenting approaches, which contrasts with the communal values of Ubuntu. Ubuntu emphasises collective well-being and the idea that "it takes a village to raise a child," fostering a strong sense of community and shared responsibility in child-rearing.

**Phase 7 Provision of free well-resourced mental health facilities in all communities**

Participants highlighted that traditional family structures once served as a strong support network when a family member faced challenges. Uncles, aunts, parents, siblings, and grandparents worked together to help one another during difficult times. However, this support system is no longer as prominent with the evolving social landscape. In response, participants suggested that the government should establish free mental health centres in every region of the country as an alternative source of support. To ensure these centres are truly inclusive, they should integrate modern and traditional mental health care approaches. These centres must incorporate traditional practices that resonate with the local communities. Raising awareness about the existence of these centres is vital so people feel encouraged to use them. This effort should be accompanied by community outreach programmes to combat the stigma often associated with seeking help for mental health issues. Communities need to recognise that mental health challenges are real and deserving of attention and care.

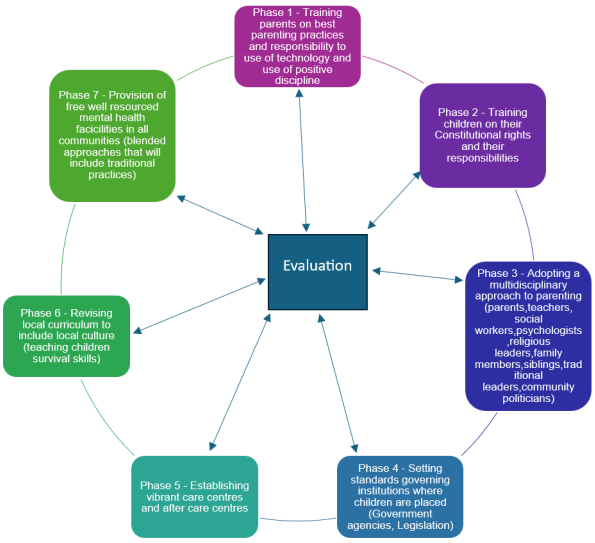



*Figure 1: Mpofu and Mayisela Comprehensive Parenting Framework for South African*

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study highlighted that parenting is a complex and multifaceted activity. Parents must learn about best practices for effective parenting, including understanding the four parenting styles and their respective advantages and drawbacks. In today's digital age, parents must also monitor their children's technology use to protect them from harmful content. Additionally, educating children on the responsible use of technology is essential. Furthermore, both parents and children need to be well-informed about children's rights to prevent misuse of these rights by either party to manipulate or control the other. Given the complexity of parenting, a multidisciplinary approach is highly recommended. This approach allows all stakeholders, including parents, educators, healthcare professionals, and others, to collaborate effectively in raising well-rounded children. Daycare and aftercare centres have become essential services, not merely optional. However, these centres must be safe and supportive environments for children. To ensure this, government agencies must regulate all facilities that cater to children's needs. Additionally, given the limited family support structures in many communities, the establishment of well-resourced, free mental health centres is strongly encouraged to support both parents and children. This study was conducted in Johannesburg. Gauteng province of South Africa. Similar studies can be done in other regions, maybe focusing on rural communities.

## VIII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

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