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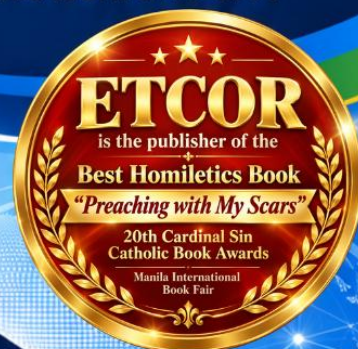
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Parenting practices in addressing challenging behaviors of learners with special needs in self-contained settings

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Abstract

Aim: The study aimed to explore the parenting practices of parents of learners with special needs in self-contained settings in addressing challenging behaviors. Specifically, it sought to identify the challenging behaviors described by parents by learners, examine the parenting strategies used to manage these behaviors, explore the challenges and support needs encountered by parents, and develop a Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST) based on the findings.

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive research design was employed. Purposive criterion sampling was used to select ten (10) parents or guardians of learners with special needs in self-contained settings in the Schools Division Office of Tayabas City during School Year 2025–2026. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview guide and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis.

Results: Three major themes emerged from the analysis: Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation, Calm and Gentle Communication, and Professional and Educational Support. Parents described tantrums, aggression, emotional outbursts, self-injurious behaviors, communication difficulties, frustration, and sensory sensitivities among the challenging behaviors experienced by their children. Parents primarily used calm and gentle communication, emotional regulation strategies, positive reinforcement, environmental modifications, and other supportive practices to manage these behaviors. Parents also identified financial constraints, caregiving responsibilities, limited access to intervention services, and the need for guidance from teachers, therapists, and other professionals. These findings informed the development of the proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST).

Conclusion: The findings indicate that addressing challenging behaviors among learners with special needs requires individualized, family-centered, and context-responsive support. The study highlights the importance of calm and supportive parenting practices, coordinated home-school collaboration, and access to professional and community-based services. The proposed PBST may provide a practical resource for parents, special education teachers, and school administrators in strengthening behavior support practices and promoting positive educational and developmental outcomes for learners with special needs.

Keywords: *parenting practices, challenging behaviors, learners with special needs, self-contained settings, special needs education, Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST)*

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, an estimated 240 million children — about 1 in 10 — live with a disability, and these children are consistently disadvantaged across nearly every measure of child well-being, including health, protection, and education (UNICEF, 2021). Access to inclusive education also remains uneven: UNESCO's (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report found that fewer than 10 percent of countries have laws that fully support inclusive education, and that laws in roughly a quarter of countries still require children with disabilities to be educated in separate settings rather than in mainstream classrooms. These global patterns of exclusion suggest that behavioral and developmental support for children with special needs cannot rely on schools alone — the role of the family, and particularly parents' capacity to manage challenging behaviors at home, is an essential complement to school-based intervention.

Many children with special needs display emotional reactions, aggression, noncompliance, communication difficulties, and sensory-related responses that may interfere with learning and social participation, both in school and



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at home, often placing parents as primary caregivers and first teachers. As inclusive and special education has expanded globally, greater focus has been placed on family-school partnerships and equipping parents with effective behavior-management strategies, given the crucial role of parental involvement in learners' behavioral, social, and educational outcomes (Zakirova-Engstrand & Wilder, 2024; Fernández Cerero et al., 2024; Gaspar & Sahay, 2025).

Despite this, many families still struggle to manage their child's behavior amid financial constraints, caregiving demands, and limited access to services and school collaboration. Parents of children with disabilities report higher stress and fewer opportunities for effective behavior management and school partnership (Sartor et al., 2023; Woolfson, 2025), indicating that education must move beyond a teacher-centered approach to involve parents as critical partners.

In the Philippines, inclusive education is supported through national policies such as DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, which recognizes inclusive education and self-contained classes as program options for learners with special needs (Department of Education, 2009), and Republic Act No. 11650, which strengthens the provision of inclusive education and support services for learners with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2022). These policies establish a framework for educational access and support while emphasizing collaboration among schools, families, and communities.

At the local level, the Schools Division Office of Tayabas City continues to implement Special Needs Education and inclusive education initiatives through program implementation and related activities concerning learners with disabilities (City Schools Division of the City of Tayabas, 2025). However, available local documentation primarily describes school programs and administrative activities, providing limited empirical evidence on how parents manage challenging behaviors in their children's everyday home and community settings.

Although Philippine-related literature has examined inclusive education, teacher experiences, special education-related practices, and parent-school involvement, limited qualitative evidence specifically describes the day-to-day behavior-management practices, challenges, and support needs of parents of learners with special needs in self-contained public-school settings (Zeta, 2026). This gap is particularly relevant in Tayabas City, where local evidence can help connect existing school-based programs with the realities faced by families at home.

The present study explored the parenting practices of parents of learners with special needs in self-contained settings in Tayabas City, identifying commonly experienced challenging behaviors, the strategies parents use, the challenges and support systems that shape their practices, and using these findings as the basis for developing a Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST). The study provides localized evidence that may inform parent education, home-school partnerships, and behavioral support in Special Needs Education.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

This review synthesized studies on parenting practices in addressing challenging behaviors of learners with special needs in self-contained settings, organized into five themes: Positive Behavior Support Strategies, Parental Stress and Coping Mechanisms, Family-School Collaboration and Communication, Parenting Practices in Managing Challenging Behaviors, and Parental Support and Involvement in Special Education. Together, these themes clarify the factors shaping parents' behavior-management practices and existing gaps in support, forming the basis for evidence-based interventions in parent education, home-school collaboration, and behavioral support.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is an evidence-based approach that uses functional assessment, structured routines, positive reinforcement, and environmental modifications to address challenging behaviors among children with special needs (Konstantinidou et al., 2023). Parent-mediated PBS interventions have been associated with reductions in aggression, tantrums, and self-injurious behaviors and improvements in adaptive functioning and parental well-being (Mestari et al., 2025). Ranta et al. (2025) further found that parent education and training improved PBS implementation and reduced parenting stress. These findings support the use of structured behavioral strategies and parent training, although their implementation may depend on parents' knowledge, training, and available support. Evidence on these factors among Filipino parents in self-contained public-school settings remains limited.

Parental Stress and Coping Mechanisms

Parents of children with special needs experience emotional, financial, and caregiving challenges that may affect their capacity to provide consistent support (Cheng & Lai, 2023; Mbatha & Mokwena, 2023; Biggs et al., 2024). Adaptive coping strategies, including social support and problem-solving, have been associated with improved psychological well-being and caregiving capacity (Bode, 2024; Mundoc et al., 2024), while financial strain and limited

services may contribute to parental burnout (Ren et al., 2024). Although these studies identify important stressors and coping responses, they do not establish that particular coping strategies directly produce better behavior-management outcomes. This indicates the need to examine how parents experience and respond to these challenges within their specific context.

Family–School Collaboration and Communication

Family–school collaboration supports communication, shared responsibility, and coordination of behavioral interventions for learners with special needs (Nordin et al., 2024; Al-Ahmed, 2025; Koskela & Sinkkonen, 2025). Related research in Philippine public-school settings has also examined teacher involvement in school-wide program decision-making, underscoring the importance of participation and collaborative processes within educational institutions (Lugasan et al., 2026). However, communication barriers, limited parental participation, and institutional constraints may hinder effective collaboration (Zakirova-Engstrand & Wilder, 2024; Gaspar & Sahay, 2025; Woolfson, 2025). Thus, the literature consistently identifies communication and participation as important features of collaborative educational practice, while also showing that barriers may arise from both family and school contexts.

Parenting Practices in Managing Challenging Behaviors

Responsive, warm, and consistent parenting has been associated with better emotional regulation and adaptive behavior, whereas harsh or inconsistent practices are associated with more externalizing behaviors (Suvarna et al., 2024; Klein et al., 2024). O'Nions et al. (2020) and Lee et al. (2022) further examined the relationship between parenting practices, challenging behaviors, and family functioning, while Cercado et al. (2025) emphasized coordination between home- and school-based strategies. Related work has also examined classroom management approaches for managing challenging learner behaviors in educational settings (Llaguno & Paulete, 2026). Together, these studies support the relevance of parenting and behavior-management practices in responding to challenging behaviors, but they examine related factors from different perspectives and do not establish a single causal relationship among them. The present study therefore examines parents' actual practices and experiences in managing challenging behaviors.

Parental Support and Involvement in Special Education

Parental involvement may include communication with teachers, home-based learning, school participation, and emotional and financial support (Marasigan-Pagkalinawan & Cordova, 2024). Recent work has also examined parents' assessments of learners' collaboration and social interaction in educational settings, highlighting the relevance of parents' perspectives in understanding learners' experiences (Ortiz, 2026). Guo and Keles (2025) found that the effectiveness of parent-involved interventions varies according to the type and intensity of parental engagement, while Rios et al. (2024) found that culturally responsive parent education can improve parents' knowledge and advocacy skills. These findings indicate that parental involvement can be strengthened through appropriate support, but limited evidence describes the specific behavioral support needs of parents of learners in self-contained public-school settings in the Philippines. The present study addresses this gap by examining parents' practices, challenges, and support needs as a basis for developing the Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST).

Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature reviewed suggests that parents' capacity to manage the challenging behaviors of children with special needs is shaped by the interplay of five interconnected factors identified across this review: the accessibility and consistency of Positive Behavior Support strategies (Theme 1); the level of parental stress and the adequacy of parents' coping resources (Theme 2); the strength and consistency of family–school collaboration (Theme 3); parents' specific behavior-management practices in the home (Theme 4); and the degree of structured support and involvement parents receive in navigating special education systems (Theme 5). Across these themes, a consistent pattern emerges: parents' behavior-management practices appear strongest when supported by consistent professional guidance, positive family–school communication, adequate coping resources, and structured opportunities for involvement, and weakest where any of these supports is absent. However, few studies have examined how these five factors interact specifically among Filipino parents in public school self-contained classrooms, where financial constraints, caregiving demands, and limited access to support services are common. Furthermore, there is limited evidence in the Schools Division Office of Tayabas City. To address this integrated gap, the current study examined the challenging behaviors, parenting practices, and support needs described by parents of learners with special needs, in order to develop a Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST) that responds jointly to the behavioral, relational, and systemic dimensions identified across these five themes.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Skinner's behavioral perspective (Skinner, 1938), particularly the antecedent-behavior-consequence (ABC) framework, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These theories served as complementary interpretive lenses for understanding parents' descriptions of challenging behaviors, their parenting practices, and the contexts in which behavior management occurred.

The behavioral perspective is grounded in Skinner's analysis of operant behavior and the role of environmental contingencies in shaping behavior (Skinner, 1938). Applied Behavior Analysis subsequently developed as an applied scientific approach, with Baer et al. (1968) articulating its defining dimensions. Within this perspective, the ABC framework provides a way of understanding the relationship among antecedents, behaviors, and consequences. In the present study, this framework was used to interpret parents' descriptions of situations preceding challenging behaviors, the behaviors themselves, and parents' responses or consequences, including reinforcement, redirection, and environmental modification. The framework was not used as a predetermined coding scheme; rather, it served as an interpretive lens for understanding themes generated through the qualitative analysis of parents' accounts.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) provides a broader contextual lens for understanding how children and families are situated within interconnected environments, including the family, school, community, and wider social context. The theory recognizes that parenting practices and caregiving experiences may be situated within factors such as family relationships, school support, available resources, and community conditions. In this study, the theory was used to interpret the contextual aspects of parents' experiences, particularly the challenges and support needs they described while managing challenging behaviors.

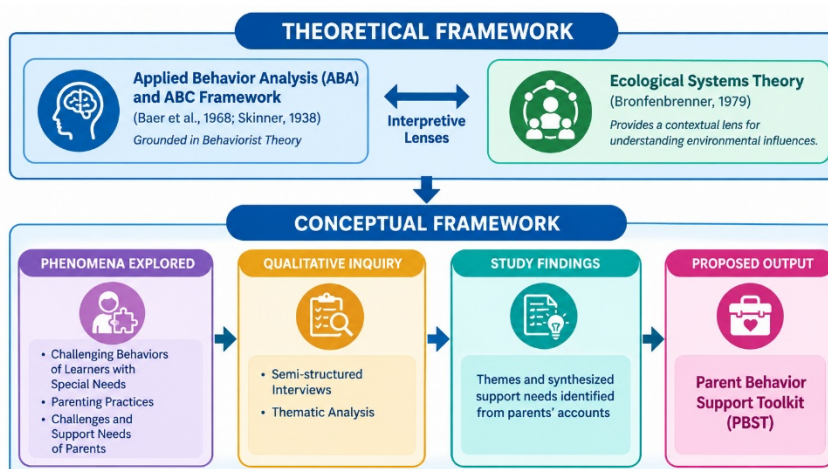
Together, these theories provided complementary lenses for interpreting the behavioral and contextual dimensions of parents' accounts. The theories did not serve as predetermined categories for coding the data and were not treated as variables to be tested. Instead, they supported the interpretation of themes concerning challenging behaviors, parenting practices, and parents' challenges and support needs. The findings from these areas served as the basis for the proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST).

Conceptual Framework

The figure below presents the conceptual framework of the study, titled "Parenting Practices in Addressing Challenging Behaviors of Learners with Special Needs in Self-Contained Settings." It presents the phenomena examined in the study: (1) challenging behaviors of learners with special needs, (2) parenting practices used in managing these behaviors, and (3) challenges and support needs experienced by parents. The theoretical perspectives of ABA/ABC and Ecological Systems Theory are presented separately as interpretive lenses that informed the understanding of these concepts.

Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework for Parenting Practices in Addressing Challenging Behaviors of Learners with Special Needs in Self-Contained Settings





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The conceptual framework reflects the actual scope of the inquiry rather than a causal model. It shows that the study explored parents' descriptions of challenging behaviors, their responses and behavior-management practices, and the challenges and supports they encountered. These areas were examined through qualitative interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The resulting themes provided the basis for identifying relevant parent support needs and for developing the proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST).

Thus, the framework does not assume that the identified concepts have a direct causal relationship. Instead, it represents the sequence of inquiry from the phenomenon being described, to parents' reported practices and experiences, to the synthesis of findings that informed the proposed toolkit.

Statement of the Problem

Learners with special needs who exhibit challenging behaviors may require consistent and context-responsive behavioral support across home and school environments. For parents, addressing such behaviors may involve communication strategies, emotional support, environmental and sensory adjustments, redirection, positive attention, and other forms of behavior management. The use and feasibility of these practices may vary according to the family's circumstances, available resources, caregiving responsibilities, access to professional services, and collaboration with schools and other support providers.

Existing literature has examined behavioral interventions, parenting practices, parental stress and coping, and family-school collaboration in relation to learners with special needs. However, the experiences of Filipino parents in managing challenging behaviors within their natural home environments remain insufficiently documented, particularly among parents of learners enrolled in public-school self-contained settings. There is also a need to better understand how parents adapt their behavior-management practices when they encounter contextual constraints such as financial limitations, caregiving demands, limited access to specialized services, and inadequate support networks. This gap is educationally significant because behavioral support provided at home may complement the interventions and support provided in school. A clearer understanding of parents' experiences, strategies, challenges, and support needs may provide useful evidence for strengthening parent education, home-school collaboration, and family-centered support for learners with special needs.

Accordingly, the present study explored the challenging behaviors described by parents, the parenting practices they use to address these behaviors, and the challenges and sources of support they encounter. The qualitative findings were also used as a basis for proposing a Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST) containing practical and accessible support materials and strategies for parents of learners with special needs.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to explore the parenting practices used by parents of learners with special needs in addressing challenging behaviors in self-contained settings and to use the findings as a basis for proposing a Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST).

Specifically, the study aimed:

1. To identify the challenging behaviors described by parents among learners with special needs in self-contained settings;
2. To explore the parenting practices and strategies used by parents to address the challenging behaviors of their children with special needs;
3. To examine the challenges encountered by parents in addressing their children's challenging behaviors and the forms of support they identify as helpful or needed; and
4. To propose practical and accessible support materials and strategies, based on the qualitative findings, that may assist parents in addressing the behavioral challenges of learners with special needs.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenging behaviors do parents identify and describe among learners with special needs in self-contained settings?
2. What parenting practices and strategies do parents use to address the challenging behaviors of their children with special needs?
3. What challenges do parents encounter in addressing their children's challenging behaviors, and what forms of support do they identify as helpful or needed?

4. Based on the qualitative findings, what practical and accessible support materials and strategies may be proposed for parents of learners with special needs?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive design was used to explore the parenting practices of parents or guardians of learners with special needs in addressing challenging behaviors in self-contained settings. This design was appropriate because the study sought to obtain detailed descriptions of participants' experiences, practices, challenges, and support needs within their natural contexts rather than to test causal relationships or statistical differences. Semi-structured interviews were used to generate rich descriptive data, which were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis.

The analysis was conducted by identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the participants' narratives. The behavioral and ecological perspectives presented in the theoretical framework were used as interpretive lenses in understanding the findings rather than as predetermined coding categories. Trustworthiness was supported through consultation with a qualitative research expert, maintenance of an audit trail documenting the analytical process, member checking, and the use of participant quotations to support the interpretation of the findings.

Population and Sampling

The participants were parents or guardians of learners with special needs enrolled in self-contained classes in public schools under the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Tayabas City, Quezon Province. They were selected because they had firsthand experience in addressing the challenging behaviors of their children in the home setting.

Criterion purposive sampling was used to select participants who met the established inclusion criteria and could provide information relevant to the objectives of the study. The inclusion criteria were: (1) parents or guardians of learners aged 5 to 12 years with special needs; (2) learners enrolled in public schools under the SDO of Tayabas City; (3) parents or guardians who voluntarily agreed to participate and provided informed consent; and (4) parents or guardians whose children exhibited challenging behaviors such as tantrums, aggression, self-injurious behavior, or noncompliance. Parents or guardians whose children were currently receiving professional behavioral intervention (e.g., therapy, counseling, or a structured clinical intervention program) were excluded to ensure that the challenging behaviors and parenting practices described in the study reflected parents' own home-based strategies rather than the effects of an ongoing external intervention. Individuals who did not provide informed consent or who did not complete the interview were also excluded from the final participant group.

Research Instruments

The primary research instrument was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit detailed descriptions of the experiences of parents or guardians of learners with special needs in addressing challenging behaviors in self-contained settings. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions concerning the challenging behaviors observed by the participants, their behavior-management practices, the difficulties they encountered, and the sources of support they accessed or considered helpful. Probing and clarifying questions were used when necessary to obtain additional details and clarify participants' responses. Before data collection, the interview guide underwent content validation by three experts with master's degrees in Special Education and expertise in qualitative research, inclusive education, behavior management, and intervention programs for learners with special needs. The validators reviewed the questions for clarity, neutrality, organization, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. The interview guide was revised based on their recommendations. Items containing multiple concepts were divided into more focused questions, ambiguous wording was clarified, and the sequence of questions was adjusted from general to more sensitive topics to facilitate rapport and participant engagement. The finalized interview guide was used consistently throughout the data collection process.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection commenced after ethics approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) of the National Teachers College and permission was secured from the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Tayabas City. Eligible participants were identified with the assistance of their Special Education (SPED) teachers based on the established inclusion criteria. The SPED teachers assisted only in identifying potential participants; recruitment, invitations, and informed consent procedures were conducted by the researchers to support voluntary participation and minimize potential influence on participants. Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted



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using the validated interview guide. The interviews were conducted at school premises after class hours and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes per participant. With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Probing and clarifying questions were used when necessary to obtain detailed descriptions of participants' experiences and clarify their responses. Data collection continued until successive interviews yielded no substantively new codes, themes, or meaningful information relevant to the research questions. Throughout the process, participant identities were protected through appropriate anonymization procedures, and the interview recordings, transcripts, and other research data were stored securely and accessed only by authorized persons.

Treatment of Data

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis was inductive, allowing patterns and themes to emerge from participants' narratives rather than applying predetermined thematic categories. The process involved six stages: (1) familiarization with the interview transcripts; (2) generation of initial codes; (3) searching for potential themes; (4) reviewing and refining the themes; (5) defining and naming the final themes; and (6) producing the analytic report.

The researchers repeatedly reviewed the transcripts and codes to examine the consistency and coherence of the emerging themes in relation to the research questions. The developing themes were discussed with a qualitative research expert to obtain an additional assessment of their clarity, coherence, and grounding in the interview data.

Member checking was conducted with all 10 participants after the initial analysis. The researchers provided participants with summaries of their interview responses and the corresponding interpretations for confirmation and clarification. The member checking was conducted through face-to-face discussions and online communication, depending on participant availability. Participants were given an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the information, clarify their responses, and identify any interpretation that did not accurately reflect their intended meaning. The researchers incorporated the participants' clarifications into the final transcripts and interpretations and made necessary revisions to the relevant descriptions and themes.

Representative quotations from participants were incorporated into the presentation of the findings to demonstrate how the identified themes were grounded in their narratives. Reflexive documentation and systematic records of the coding, theme-development, and member-checking processes were maintained as an audit trail to support the credibility and transparency of the analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles. Ethics approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) of the National Teachers College, and permission was secured from the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Tayabas City before data collection.

Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained before interviews, including participants' right to decline, withdraw, or terminate without penalty. Because interviews involved sensitive experiences, the researchers monitored participants' emotional responses and paused, rescheduled, or ended the interview if distress occurred.

Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonyms, omission of non-essential identifying details, and secure, password-protected, encrypted storage accessible only to authorized personnel, in accordance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the findings in relation to the research questions. Data from semi-structured interviews with ten (10) parents of learners with special needs in self-contained settings were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Three empirical themes emerged from the participants' accounts: Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation, Calm and Gentle Communication, and Professional and Educational Support. These themes reflect patterns identified within the study sample and are not intended to represent generalizable frequencies. These findings informed the proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST), presented as the study's applied output rather than as a fourth empirical theme.



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Table 1

Summary of Research Questions, Themes, and Synthesis of Findings

Research Question	Dominant Theme	Synthesis of Findings
RQ1: What challenging behaviors do parents identify and describe among learners with special needs in self-contained settings?	Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation	Parents described tantrums, aggression, self-injury, emotional outbursts, and difficulty regulating behavior in response to various triggers.
RQ2: What parenting practices and strategies do parents use to manage challenging behaviors?	Calm and Gentle Communication	Parents described using calm communication, distraction, redirection, routines, preferred activities, and other individualized strategies.
RQ3: What challenges and support needs do parents encounter in managing challenging behaviors?	Professional and Educational Support	Parents described the need for professional guidance, parent education, accessible services, and continued collaboration with schools and other support providers.
RQ4: Based on the qualitative findings, what practical and accessible support materials and strategies may be proposed for parents of learners with special needs?	Proposed Research Output: Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST)	The findings from the three research questions informed the development of the Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST), which integrates behavior identification, parent-reported behavior-management strategies, home-school collaboration, and information on accessing professional support.

Theme 1. Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation

Participants described challenging behaviors that included tantrums, aggression, self-injury, and emotional distress. P2 reported, "Madalas po siyang magtantrums at mahirap pakalmahin," while P6 shared, "May mga pagkakataon din po na nananakit siya kapag hindi niya makontrol ang emotions niya." P5 also described self-injurious behavior, stating, "Minsan po sinasaktan niya yung sarili niya tulad ng pagsampal sa mukha."

Participants also associated these behaviors with particular situations, such as changes in routine, loud sounds, and overstimulation. These accounts suggest that challenging behaviors occurred in different contexts identified by the parents. The findings describe participants' experiences but do not establish specific causes or determine which factors were most influential.

Theme 2. Calm and Gentle Communication

Parents reported using calm communication and other strategies when responding to challenging behaviors. P2 stated, "Kapag kalmado na po siya, saka ko siya nilalapitan at kinakausap nang mahinahon," while P3 shared, "Kinakausap ko muna siya nang mahinahon." Other strategies included distraction and the use of preferred items. P4 reported, "Dinidistract ko siya sa ibang activity na gusto niya," while P10 stated, "Ibinibigay ko muna ang cellphone niya dahil iyon ang pinakamabilis na paraan para kumalma siya."

These accounts show the strategies reported by parents but do not establish that one strategy was more effective than another.

Theme 3. Professional and Educational Support

Participants described professional guidance and additional parent support as areas of need. P2 shared, "May mga natutunan po kaming techniques mula sa therapists na ginagamit ko hanggang ngayon sa bahay." P3 expressed the need for parent seminars, stating, "Malaking tulong din po sana kung may seminars para sa parents tungkol sa tamang pag-handle ng challenging behaviors." P6 also identified the need for accessible services: "Sana po ay magkaroon ng libreng therapy at government services na mas madaling ma-access."

These responses reflect participants' reported sources of support and continuing support needs. They do not establish that professional support directly improves behavioral outcomes.

Proposed Research Output: Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST)

The findings from the three empirical themes informed the proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST). The toolkit integrates behavior identification, parent-reported behavior-management strategies, home-school



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collaboration, and information on accessing professional support. It is presented as a practical resource based on the participants' reported experiences and support needs and was not tested as an intervention in the present study.

Table 2

Proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST) Based on the Findings

Dominant	Purpose	Description
Behavior Identification Guide	To help parents recognize and understand challenging behaviors.	Provides descriptions of common challenging behaviors, possible triggers, and observable warning signs to support early identification.
Positive Behavior Support Strategies	To help parents document behavioral patterns and responses over time.	Presents practical strategies such as calm and gentle communication, emotional regulation techniques, positive reinforcement, redirection, and environmental modification.
Home Behavior Monitoring Tool	To help parents track behavioral patterns and record observed progress over time.	Includes simple behavior monitoring sheets for recording triggers, behaviors, interventions used, and outcomes to support consistent implementation.
Home-School Collaboration Guide	To strengthen communication between parents and school personnel.	Provides communication logs, parent-teacher collaboration tips, and recommendations for coordinated behavior support.
Professional Referral and Support Directory	To connect families with appropriate services.	Lists available professionals and agencies, referral procedures, and guidance for accessing assessment, therapy, and intervention services.
Parent Education Resources	To increase parents' knowledge and confidence in behavior management.	Includes evidence-informed information on behavior management, emotional regulation, family support, and practical parenting strategies.

Conclusions

The findings show that parents of learners with special needs in self-contained settings described challenging behaviors that included tantrums, aggression, emotional outbursts, self-injury, and emotional distress. Participants also described communication difficulties, frustration, changes in routine, and sensitivity to noise or crowded environments in relation to behavioral episodes. These findings indicate that challenging behaviors were described in different contexts and should be understood in relation to the individual circumstances reported by the parents.

The findings also show that parents reported using calm and gentle communication, reassurance, patience, distraction, environmental modification, and other supportive strategies when responding to challenging behaviors. These accounts describe the practices used by participants but do not establish that one strategy was more effective than another.

Participants further described professional and educational support as areas of need, including guidance from teachers, therapists, and specialists, parent seminars, and more accessible intervention services. Financial constraints and caregiving demands were also reported as challenges in obtaining support. These findings reflect the participants' reported experiences and support needs within the study context.

Based on the three empirical themes, the study developed the proposed Parent Behavior Support Toolkit (PBST) as an applied output. The toolkit is intended to provide parents with practical information on identifying challenging behaviors, using supportive behavior-management strategies, strengthening home-school collaboration, and accessing professional support. The PBST has not yet been validated by experts or field-tested; therefore, its effectiveness has not been established.

Overall, the study provides context-specific qualitative evidence from ten parents of learners with special needs in a self-contained setting in Tayabas City. The findings contribute to understanding the challenging behaviors, parenting practices, and support needs described by the participants and provide a basis for a proposed parent-focused support resource.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Parents may be provided with accessible guidance and practical resources on identifying challenging behaviors and applying supportive, individualized behavior-management strategies.
2. Schools may strengthen home-school communication and collaboration to support consistency in responding to learners' behavioral needs.
3. Teachers, therapists, and other professionals may provide parent-oriented training or seminars on behavior management, communication, and appropriate support strategies.
4. Schools and relevant agencies may explore ways to improve parents' access to intervention and support services, particularly for families experiencing financial and caregiving constraints.
5. The proposed PBST may undergo expert validation and field testing before broader use to determine its clarity, relevance, acceptability, and practical applicability.
6. Future researchers may examine the experiences of a larger and more diverse group of parents across different schools or Schools Divisions to determine whether similar themes emerge in other contexts.

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