

## **Role of Parents and Shura Members in the Improvement of Foundational Skill**

Parents and Shura members play a critical role in the improvement of foundational skills for children. According to UNICEF, “A child’s early years are one of the most critical periods of human development. Already at this time – with the size of a child’s brain reaching 80% of that of an adult by age 3, and 90% by age 5 – children acquire the ability to think, communicate, express emotions and form relationships.” (1) Thus, it is essential that children between the ages 0-5 receive adequate support from parents and Shura members in order to develop strong foundational skills including cognitive, motor control, language & literacy, social-emotional competencies and more.

Herein, after providing an elaborative information on word “**Shura**”, we would like to point out some of the key rules of which parents and Shura members can follow to promote and improve foundational skills in their communities.

### **What is meant by Shura?**

Shura is an Arabic word which means a consultative council.

The use of word “Shura members” herein means members of School councils.

The “Bill of Schools’ Councils” in Afghanistan was drafted and come to effect under the Article 48<sup>th</sup> of “Afghanistan’s Law of Education”.

Section 3 of above mentioned bill draws 12 objectives of Schools’ councils (2) which highlights the importance of Shuras in the improvement of foundational skills.

### **Parental Role in the Improvement of Foundational Skills:**

Research shows that parental involvement in education positively impacts student achievement and social development.(3) Parents play a vital role in the improvement of foundational skills in children. Their involvement and support at home greatly contribute to a child's overall learning and development. Here are some key ways parents can enhance foundational skills:

**1. Establish a Learning Environment:** Creating a conducive environment for learning at home is essential. This can include having a quiet study area, providing necessary resources like books and educational materials, and setting aside dedicated time for learning.

A **meta-analysis** conducted by the **Harvard Family Research Project** found that when parents are involved in their child's education, students are more likely to have higher grades, test scores, and attendance rates. **(4)**

**2. Encourage Reading Habits:** Reading is a fundamental skill that lays the foundation for academic success. Parents can foster a love for reading by reading aloud to their children, providing access to a variety of age-appropriate books, and engaging in discussions about the stories.

Studies indicate that children who are regularly read to by their parents have enhanced language development and literacy skills. **(5)**

**3. Promote Language and Communication Skills:** Conversations and discussions play a crucial role in developing language and communication skills. Parents can engage in meaningful conversations with their children, encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas, and introduce vocabulary through everyday interactions.

**4. Support Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking:** Parents can help children develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills by providing opportunities for them to tackle challenges. Encouraging them to think independently, ask questions, and find solutions fosters their ability to think analytically and creatively.

**5. Collaborate with Teachers:** Establishing regular communication with teachers allows parents to stay updated on their child's progress and areas that need improvement. By regularly discussing their child's educational needs and goals, parents can work in tandem with teachers to address any challenges and provide additional support.

**6. Set Realistic Expectations:** Setting realistic expectations, based on each child's individual abilities, is crucial. Parents should appreciate each child's progress and provide encouragement and support throughout their learning journey. This helps build confidence and motivation.

**7. Engage in Educational Activities:** Engaging in educational activities, both inside and outside the home, can further enhance foundational skills. This can include educational games, puzzles, hands-on experiments, and visits to museums or libraries.

By actively participating in their child's education and creating a supportive learning environment, parents contribute significantly to the improvement of foundational skills. Their involvement fosters a strong educational foundation that will benefit their children throughout their academic journey and beyond.

### **Shura members' Role in the Improvement of Foundational Skills:**

Shura members or School councils' members play a significant role in the improvement of foundational skills in students. According to a study by the **National School Boards Association**, schools with active parent and community involvement in the mode of council's activities show higher student achievement levels and greater school improvement. (6)

Here are some key ways in which school councils contribute to this process:

**1. Collaborative Decision-Making:** School councils consist of parents, teachers, and community members who work together to make decisions regarding educational policies, programs, and resources. By actively involving stakeholders in these decisions, school councils ensure that foundational skills development remains a priority.

**2. Advocacy for Quality Education:** School councils advocate for quality education by promoting the implementation of effective teaching strategies and curricula. They collaborate with school administrators and teachers to ensure that foundational skills are integrated into the curriculum and instruction.

**3. Provision of Resources:** School councils play a crucial role in securing resources necessary for improving foundational skills. They may fundraise, apply for grants, or engage with community organizations to acquire additional resources such as books, educational materials, and technology to enhance learning opportunities.

**4. Parent Engagement and Involvement:** School councils facilitate parent engagement and involvement in various school activities. They organize parent workshops, informational sessions, and events that promote parental participation in their child's education. This engagement strengthens the home-school partnership and supports the improvement of foundational skills.

**5. Community Collaboration:** School councils often engage with the community to address specific needs related to foundational skills development. By collaborating with community organizations, businesses, and local leaders, school councils can provide additional resources, mentorship opportunities, and extracurricular programs that enhance foundational skill building.

**The Journal of Educational Research and Practice** states that collaborations with community organizations can enhance student learning outcomes, specifically in the areas of foundational skills. (7)

**6. Monitoring and Evaluation:** School councils monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and interventions aimed at improving foundational skills. They collect data, assess student outcomes, and provide feedback to school administrators and teachers. This information helps in refining strategies to better meet the needs of students.

**7. Collaboration with Teachers:** School councils work closely with teachers to support their professional development and provide them with necessary resources for improving instructional practices related to foundational skills. This collaboration ensures alignment between the efforts of school councils and classroom teaching practices.

In conclusion, school councils' members or Shura's members have a crucial role in the improvement of foundational skills. Through collaborative decision-making, advocacy, resource provision, parent engagement, community collaboration, monitoring, and collaboration with teachers, school councils contribute to creating a supportive and effective environment for enhancing foundational skills in students.

## Conclusion

Considering the above points, it appears that parents and shura members play a crucial role in the improvement of foundational skills within communities. They have the ability to shape and influence the learning environment for children, ensuring that they receive the necessary support and guidance to develop strong foundational skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Herein we conclude it in pointwise as follow:

- 1. Raise awareness:** Parents and Shura members should educate themselves and others about the importance of foundational skills, such as literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. By understanding the significance of these skills, they can create a community-wide emphasis on their development.
- 2. Set high expectations:** Parents and Shura members should set high expectations for students' achievements in foundational skills. This includes creating a culture that prioritizes education and a growth mindset, encouraging children to strive for continuous improvement.
- 3. Facilitate access to educational resources:** Parents and Shura members can work together to ensure that children have access to quality educational resources within their community. This includes advocating for well-equipped libraries, internet access, and extracurricular programs that foster foundational skill development.
- 4. Collaborate with schools:** Parents and Shura members should actively engage with schools to support students' learning. This could involve attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in school events, and communicating regularly with teachers to monitor children's progress and address any challenges in foundational skill development.
- 5. Promote lifelong learning:** Parents and Shura members should model a love for learning by engaging in their own continuous education and professional development. This demonstrates to children the importance of constantly

improving foundational skills and encourages them to adopt the same attitude.

**6. Provide mentorship and guidance:** Parents and Shura members can play mentorship roles, guiding children in their educational journeys. This could involve assisting with homework, offering guidance on study techniques, and exposing children to diverse educational experiences such as workshops, field trips, and community-based projects.

**7. Encourage a balanced approach:** While emphasizing the importance of foundational skills, parents and Shura members should also encourage a balance between academics and other aspects of a child's development. This includes supporting participation in sports, arts, and other extracurricular activities that contribute to a well-rounded skill set.

**8. Foster a supportive community:** Parents and Shura members should work together to create a community that supports and values education. This could involve organizing parent support groups, community events centered around learning, and collaborations with local education-focused organizations.

**9. Celebrate achievements:** Recognizing and celebrating children's achievements in foundational skill development helps to reinforce their motivation and self-esteem. Parents and Shura members can organize award ceremonies, presentations, or other forms of recognition to acknowledge children's progress and efforts.

By embracing these rules, parents and Shura members can significantly contribute to the improvement of foundational skills in their communities. Their active involvement and dedication can create a nurturing environment where children can thrive academically and secure a bright future.

## Sources:

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نویسنده: احمد خالد آرام، مدیر عمومی بخش حقوقی و شرعی دفتر «خانه»، ماستر حقوق  
بین الملل.

Authored by: Ahmad Khaled Aram, KHANA's Legal and Sharia  
Manager. (B.A.LL.B.LL.M)