

Why Parent Engagement Is Important

What Experts Say

Overview

Research over the last forty years provides educators and parents with a substantial body of evidence that parent involvement and engagement is associated with children's academic performance¹ and social competence². Comprehensive surveys of this research document the following benefits for students, families and schools:³

Benefits

1. **Students achieve more**, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background or the parents' education level.
2. Students have **higher grades and test scores**, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
3. Students have **higher graduation rates** and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.
4. Educators hold **higher expectations of students** whose parents collaborate with the teacher.
5. Student achievement for disadvantaged children not only improves, but can also reach levels that are standard for middle-class children. In addition, the **children who are farthest behind make the greatest gains**.
6. Children from diverse cultural backgrounds perform better when parents and professionals collaborate to **bridge the gap between the culture at home and at the learning institution**.
7. Student behaviors such as **alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior decrease** as parent involvement increases.
8. Students will keep pace with academic performance if their parents participate in school events, develop a working relationship with educators, and keep up with what is happening with their child's school.
9. Junior and senior **high school students whose parents remain involved make better transitions**, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved, on the other hand, are more likely to drop out of school.

According to research, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:⁴

1. create a home environment that encourages learning.

2. communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.
3. become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

These three seemingly simple steps require dedication and commitment from all students, parents and school personnel. The resulting benefit of this investment in time and effort is well worth the future aspirations and success of every child.

Additional Information and Resources:

1. *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement.*
<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>
2. Reframing Family Involvement in Education: Supporting Families to Support Educational Equity. <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/reframing-family-involvement-in-education-supporting-families-to-support-educational-equity>
3. *Increasing Parental Involvement: A Key to Student Achievement.*
<http://www.mcrel.org/>

Actionable Items for Secondary Parents:

- Encourage your child to get involved in extra-curricular activities (athletics, drama, music, dance, foreign language, community service, photography, science, technology, robotics), and attend events to demonstrate your support.
- Support your child in getting involved in mentoring and career exploration and career shadowing experiences.
- Be active and visible in school, and communicate regularly with each of your child's teachers.
- Use technology resources to monitor your child's grades and assignments.