



Making the Case for Parent Involvement and Engagement

Part One: Parental, Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships Make a Difference

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Based on the Research

A New Wave of Evidence:

The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement

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www.sedl.org

Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)

Research synthesis, research-to-practice briefs, documentation of promising and effective practices, and original research.

www.finenetwork.org



51 Studies Were Selected For *A New Wave of Evidence*

- ◆ Early childhood through high school
- ◆ All regions of the country
- ◆ Diverse populations
- ◆ Community as well as family involvement
- ◆ A variety of research methods
- ◆ Different sources of data



Section One

How Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Affects Student Achievement



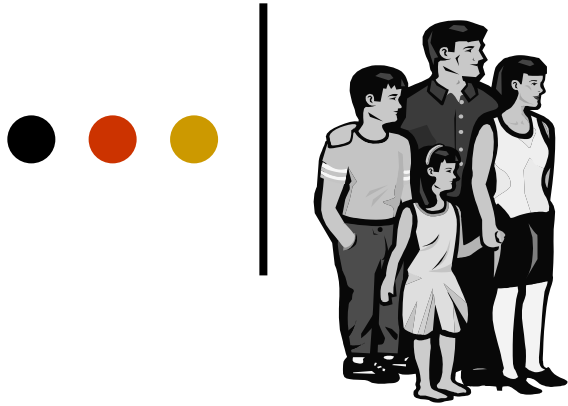
Students With Involved Parents, No Matter What Their Background, Are More Likely To:

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted and earn credits
- Adapt well to school and attend regularly
- Have better social skills and behavior
- Graduate and go on to higher education



Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at *home* are linked to higher student achievement.

Family involvement at home appears to have the *greatest affect* on student achievement.



Families of **all** cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels encourage their children, talk with them about school, help them plan for higher education, and keep them focused on learning and homework.

In other words, all families can, and do, have positive effects on their children's learning.



Parent and community involvement that is **linked to improving student learning** has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement.





Family Involvement Matters From Early Childhood Through High School

A range of parenting, home–school relationship, and family involvement behaviors matter over the course of a child’s school years, in:

- Early childhood education
- Elementary grades
- Middle and high school



What Matters in Early Childhood?

Parenting: Parent–child relationship and responsiveness

Involvement at school: Parent–teacher contact and presence in classroom

Involvement at home: Child-centered activities and literacy practices



What Matters in Elementary School?

Parenting: Parent-child communication

Involvement at school: Presence in classroom, attendance at school events

Involvement at home: Literacy practices, educational supplies, emphasis on academics and nonacademic activities, homework guidance



What Matters in Middle and High School?

Parenting: Authoritative parenting style, monitoring, and expectations

Involvement at school: Active in school community, participation in family involvement programs

Involvement at home: Homework guidance, support with time management and self-regulation



How Are Family Involvement and Achievement Related?

Through processes of *moderation*, meaning that family involvement may matter more for certain children and families

Through *mediated* pathways, meaning that other factors matter along the way

School context → involvement → achievement

Involvement → “soft” outcomes → achievement



Teachers and School Leaders Matter for Family Involvement

School practices lead to family involvement, which in turn can lead to increased student achievement:

- ◆ Teacher outreach to families
- ◆ Principal support for involvement
- ◆ School resources, services, and investment



Teachers Feel Unprepared to Work With Families

- ◆ Many state teacher certification requirements do not mention working with families
- ◆ Teacher preparation programs often do not offer courses on family involvement
- ◆ Teachers report working with families as one of their top challenges



Section Two

Effective Practices to Connect Schools, Families, and Community



Overall Finding

A home–school relationship should be a *co-constructed* reciprocal activity in which both the agency and sense of efficacy of parents, and the involvement opportunities provided by schools and other institutions that work with children are important .

(Based on evaluation data and practitioner reflections from five family involvement program models.)



Responding to Families' Interests and Needs

Responsiveness to family interests and needs helps engage families in children's schooling and sustain their participation.

Families and Schools Together (FAST) is an intervention program offering eight weekly sessions for children and their parents, with transportation, convenient scheduling, and meals, as well as intangible incentives like respect and social support.



Engaging in Dialogue With Families

Ongoing dialogue grounded in families' experiences can foster trust and mutual respect.

The Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) offers parent sessions and follow-up coaching that use dialogue to do community building, connect learning to lived experiences, and raise consciousness to take informed action.



Building on Family “Funds of Knowledge”

School learning can build on the wealth of information and ideas that parents and families impart to their children.

In the Math and Parent Partnerships project (MAPPS), workshops help parents learn about math, in part by exploring their own math experiences. Parents then become leaders of math workshops for other parents.



Training Parents for Leadership

Families, communities, and schools can work together to improve schools and reform education so that all children succeed.

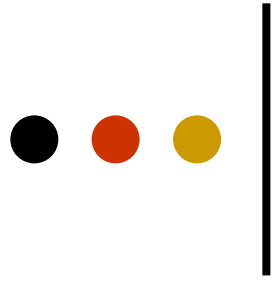
The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership helps parents analyze and use school data to design specific projects tailored to the school's needs.



Connecting Children's Learning Across Contexts

Links across children's home, school, and out-of-school contexts can foster greater learning.

Staff at Capital Kids, an after-school initiative, connect with children's classroom teachers, and convey important information to families.

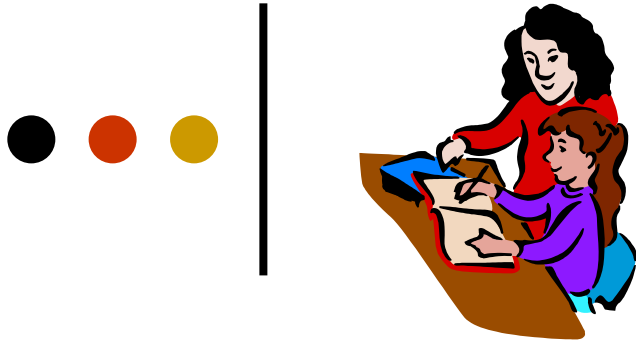


Putting the Findings Into Action



Work With School Staff to Broaden the Definition of Family and Community Involvement

- ◆ Adopt the **attitude** that all families are involved in their children's education and want guidance in their efforts to support children's learning.
- ◆ **Encourage staff** to implement both in-school away-from-school initiatives.



Link all efforts to engage families, whether based at school or in the community, to student learning.



Match Strategies to Grade Level

- ♦ **Preschool:** Home visits, lending libraries, discussion groups, and classes
- ♦ **Elementary:** Interactive homework, parent workshops, regular teacher contact, learning packets, home visits
- ♦ **Middle and high:** Explanation of courses and expectations, joint planning of program for future, info about post-secondary options, info about academic support, info about raising teens



Facilitate Transitions

- ◆ Tours of new school and visits to classes
- ◆ Meetings at feeder schools and community programs
- ◆ Home visits during the summer
- ◆ Joint planning for the next level



Bridge Class and Cultural Differences

- Understand your own cultural context
- Share cultural traditions and norms
- Create small, friendly settings
- Invite families and community members to tell their education stories
- Ask families about their expectations for their children



Embrace Partnership and Share Power

- Plan how families want to be engaged
- Consult all families about policies
- Involve families in action research



Build Social and Political Connections

- Support families to be involved in decision making
- Promote families' connections with each other, school staff, and community groups
- Invite officials to school to respond to families' concerns
- Give families information about how the system works



See Families and Communities as Having *Valuable Assets Versus Liabilities*

- ◆ Acknowledge the knowledge base of families
- ◆ Conduct an asset map, not just a needs assessment, of the community



Parents and Community Members Are More Likely to Become Involved When They:

- ◆ Understand that they **SHOULD** be involved
- ◆ Feel **CAPABLE** of making a contribution
- ◆ Feel **INVITED** by the school and their children



Web Resources

- ◆ www.ResponsiveEducation.org
- ◆ www.FINENetwork.org
- ◆ www.SEDL.org