
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Parent involvement in schools



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Active parent participation in schools has a big impact on student achievement regardless of family income or background. According to a report by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;
- Attend school regularly;
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.”

www.edweek.org/ew/issues/parent-involvement)

After several decades of study into the effect of parent involvement on students and the school climate, researchers have identified benefits to students, parents and schools alike. Education researchers Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla reviewed the research in their book, *A New Generation of Evidence: the Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, and concluded, “When parents are involved in their children’s education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school and the schools they go to are better.”

They found the following benefits to schools and parents:

Schools:

- Better morale among teachers.
- Higher ratings of teachers by parents.
- More support from families.
- A better reputation in the community.

Parents:

- More confidence at school.
- More confidence in themselves as parents and their ability to help their children learn.
- Held in higher esteem by teachers and have teachers expect more from their children.
- More likely to enroll in continuing education to advance their own schooling.

SchoolFamily.com cites the following research data:

“One study found that students from families with above-average parent involvement were 30 percent more successful in school than those with below-average parent involvement. Success was measured by GPA; test scores in math, science, reading, and social studies; promotion and retention rates; and teacher ratings.

“Another study found that in schools where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, test scores grew at a rate 40 percent higher than in schools reporting low levels of outreach to parents.” schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/10699-involvement-matters-what-parents-should-know

Increasing parent involvement

Simply knowing that greater involvement leads to better school success will not necessarily connect more parents with their child’s school experience. “According to the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), for parent involvement to flourish, it must be meaningfully integrated into a school’s programs and community. The network developed a framework of six types of parent involvement that schools can use to guide their efforts:”

- 1) Schools should help families with parenting skills;
 - 2) Communicate about school programs and student progress;
 - 3) Improve efforts to recruit and train volunteers;
 - 4) Encourage learning activities at home;
 - 5) Include parents as participants in important school decisions; and 6) Coordinate with businesses to increase resources for families and students.
- edweek.org/ew/issues/parent-involvement

Tips for parents

Parent involvement includes many different roles: volunteer, fundraiser, classroom supporter, after-school teacher, school committee members/leaders, classroom and school advocate and partner. Start as early as possible and contribute what you can. “When you get involved early in your child’s education, the results are more pronounced and long-lasting. And studies indicate that parent involvement in education has a positive effect at all grade levels: elementary, middle and high school.

Parent involvement ideas

See these ideas from SchoolFamily.com for increasing parent involvement:

“School parent groups are about building a supportive community where teachers, administrators, and students can do their best work. Here are just a few ways you might be able to help.”

- Serve as a guest reader in your child’s classroom
- Talk to a class about your job or hobby
- Design a booth for the school carnival
- Volunteer as a translator
- Staff a school welcome desk
- Serve as a resource for parents of incoming students
- Help children pick out books at the book fair
- Record a cassette tape for students to read along with
- Participate in a phone tree to help schedule parent volunteers
- Collect recyclables to be used in the classroom
- Coach students in organizational skills
- Enter fundraising orders on the computer
- Help with school cleanup or landscaping
- Organize a school talent night
- Type up class lists
- Serve on a school council or advisory board

schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/761-its-worth-every-minute