



The Values and Results of Parent Involvement

Parent leadership is the capacity for parents to interact in society with purpose and positive outcomes for children. Parents, children and communities benefit from parent involvement.

Parent Involvement helps children learn. Children show:

- Higher achievement in reading;
- Higher grades and test scores;
- Better attendance and more homework done;
- Fewer placements in special education;
- Positive attitudes and behavior;
- Higher graduation rates; and
- Greater enrollment in postsecondary education.¹

Parent Involvement helps parents:

- Have more confidence in the school environment;
- Create a higher opinion of themselves with teachers who then set higher expectations of their children;
- Enroll in continuing education to advance their own schooling; and
- Increase their ability to construct a healthy home learning environment for children.²

Parent Involvement helps school and communities:

- Improve teacher morale;
- Offer teachers higher rating by parents;
- Develop better instructional strategies for use in classroom lessons;
- Insure there will be more support from parents³; and
- Insure there will be higher student achievement.⁴

¹ A summary of selected research by John H. Wherry, Ed.D. The Parent Institute, Fairfax Station, VA and Joyce Epstein, School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share. Phi Delta Kappan, 76(9).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Henderson, A. (1994) A new Generation of Evidence: The Family is Crucial to Student Achievement. Washington, D.C. National Committee for Children in Education.

Key Tenets in School – Parent Partnerships:

- The family provides the child’s primary educational environment.
- Involving parents in their children’s formal education improves student achievement.
- Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long lasting and well planned.
- The benefits are not confined to early childhood or the elementary level; there are strong effects from involving parents continuously throughout high school.
- Involving parents in their own children’s education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools, as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the school.
- The school and home cannot be isolated from each other. We must see how they interconnect with each other and with the world at large.⁵

Successful parent involvement assumes that educational institutions adopt new beliefs and premises.

- All families have strengths. Schools should emphasize them and let parents know these strengths are valued.
- While most parents really care about their children and want the best for them, some do not know how to help them with their education.
- All parents can learn new techniques;
- Cultural differences are valid, valuable, and offer a vitality to school.
- Increasing kinds of family forms exist and function well for children. Successful schools involve stepparents, grandparents and provide family support when family resources are limited.
- All individuals and families need to feel empowered, especially families who often feel powerless. Successful programs ask parents what they would be interested in doing and work with their agendas first.⁶

⁵ Henderson, A (1987). *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement*. Columbia MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

⁶ Ziegler, S. (1987). “The effects of Parent Involvement on Children’s Achievement: The Significance of Home School Links”. Ontario, Canada. Toronto Board of Education, 1987. 72 pages. ED 304 234. Davies, Don (1989). “Poor Parents, Teachers and the Schools: Comments About Practice, Policy and Research” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, (San Francisco, CA, March 27-31, 1989), 25 pages. ED 308 574. Krasnow, Jean (1990). *Building Parent-Teacher Partnerships: Prospects from the Perspective of “The School Reaching Out” Project*. Boston Institute for Responsive Education, 1990, 66 pages. ED 318 817.