

Parental Involvement: Does It Matter to Student Achievement?

The short answer is a resounding Yes.

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.

(A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement.

A.T. Henderson and N. Berla, National Committee for Citizens in Education, Washington, D.C.)

Research tells us:

- ▶ The family makes critical contributions to student achievement from pre-school through high school. A home environment that encourages learning is more important to student achievement than income, education level, or cultural background. (Henderson and Berla)
- ▶ In 1994, the College Board found that reading achievement is more dependent on learning activities in the home than is math or science. Reading aloud to children is the most important activity that parents can do to increase their child's chance of reading success.
- ▶ When parents are involved at school as well as at home, children do better and stay in school longer. (Henderson and Berla)
- ▶ When children and parents talk regularly about school, children perform better academically. (Aston & McLanahan, 1991; Ho & Willms, 1996; Finn, 1993)
- ▶ Three kinds of parental involvement at home are consistently associated with higher student achievement: actively organizing and monitoring a child's time; helping with homework, and discussing school matters. (Finn, 1998)
- ▶ Parents who read to their children before they enter school give their children a boost toward reading success. Talking to children about books and stories read to them also supports reading achievement. (*Developing Engaged Readers in School and Home Communities*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Rahway, NJ, 1996)
- ▶ The earlier that parent involvement begins in a child's educational process, the more powerful the effects. (*Parent Involvement in Education*, Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikeland, Research You Can Use, NW Regional Educational Laboratory)
- ▶ Positive results of parental involvement in their children's schooling include improved achievement, reduced absenteeism, improved behavior, and restored confidence among parents in their children's schooling. (The Home-School Connection: Selected Partnership Programs in Large Cities. Institute for Responsive Education, Boston.)