



Harvard Family
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What U.S. research says about the benefits of parental involvement in children's learning and development from birth through high school

Over the past forty years, many researchers in the United States have examined what helps children succeed in school and prepare for higher education. One part of this research has examined the ways in which parent involvement in children's learning at home and at school affects their personal and social development and academic achievement. The strong overall finding of this research is that children and youth whose parents are actively involved in supporting learning at home and at school do better in many ways. They get better

grades, have higher graduation rates, and are more likely to go to college. Parents, schools and educational policymakers therefore are paying much more attention to ways to increase and support parent involvement as a major component of American education reform efforts.

The U.S. research on parent involvement suggests that there are three particularly important aspects of parent involvement for children's development and academic success. The first

aspect is parenting – the attitudes, values, and interactions about learning that parents demonstrate as they raise their children. The second is parent involvement in home-school relationships – the formal and informal connections, communications, and partnerships with the child's school and teachers. The third aspect is a sense of shared responsibility for learning outcomes – parents as well as the school take responsibility for the child's learning and education. This shared responsibility is reflected in parents' emphasis on educational activities



that promote learning and in their interactions with the child's school as well as in schools' efforts to reach out and increase parent involvement from kindergarten through secondary school. Parent involvement efforts that focus directly on things that parents can do that support their child's learning and academic achievements at home and at school are more likely to show academic benefits.

Accumulating research also indicates that parent involvement is strongly associated with better academic and social development throughout a child's life from birth through secondary school and into college. As a result, schools are now putting more emphasis on ways to build and support continuous parent involvement beginning with the transition into school from kindergarten and continuing through graduation. Educators influence

parent involvement through their outreach to families and their expectations and opportunities for involvement. Schools and other organizations are also developing ways to reach families in the period between birth and school with information that parents can use to promote early literacy and other aspects of early childhood development. From an early age, children themselves are important agents of parent involvement through their invitations to parents to read to them, help with homework, and to attend school events. Employers also affect parent involvement through their policies on time off to attend parent-teacher conferences and other school meetings and events.

Research about parent involvement is also more and more clear about the types of things that parents can do

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to effectively support their children's learning from early childhood through secondary school. To read the full summary of the research, broken down by Early Childhood, Elementary School Years, and Middle and Secondary School Years, visit:

<http://www.english.education.gov.qa/section/sec/annual>