



Research in Brief:

Does parent involvement improve student success?

Does parent involvement improve student academic success?

Research has found that policy makers, school administrators, teachers, parents and even students link parental involvement to student success.

Even though the body of research appears to be large, a very small number of these studies use good research methods.

Even within the small number of good research studies, the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement is inconsistent. Part of this problem may lie in the variety of definitions of both parental involvement and academic achievement.

The researcher found 5 broad categories of parent involvement.

- Parent-child communication included interest in home/school work, assistance with homework and discussing school progress.
- Home supervision included time spent doing homework, time spent watching TV, home surroundings conducive to studying, and expectation to come home after school.
- Educational aspiration for children included educational expectations and valuing academic achievement.
- School contact included parents contacting schools and schools contacting parents.
- Participation included parents volunteering at school and parents attending school functions.

A meta-analysis of 25 good quality research studies found that parental involvement does improve the academic success of students.

Parental expectations and aspirations had the strongest effect on student achievement.

Parent supervision at home had the weakest effect on student achievement.

This meta-analysis did not look at differences in parent involvement between elementary and secondary students.

Why does this matter?

- ⇒ ***Stakeholders believe that parent involvement will support their student's success.***
- ⇒ ***Teachers can encourage parents to set academic expectations and encourage their children to do well in school. Teachers can let the parents know that this can have a positive effect on their child's performance at school.***
- ⇒ ***Parents can be informed of the variety of ways in which that their involvement can encourage academic success.***
- ⇒ ***Parents can be encouraged to communicate with their children about school, participate in school activities, communicate with the teachers and set rules at home, as well as encourage their children's academic achievement and convey their aspirations to their children.***



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What is a meta-analysis?

Meta-analysis is a way of combining the results from similar studies to determine if the results from different studies add up to strong evidence. The important parts of a meta-analysis include a comprehensive search, ensuring that the results can actually be compared across studies (measuring the same thing, the same way) and a way of combining the results that is meaningful.

What did they do?

To find relevant studies, the researchers searched ERIC and PSYCHLIT. They found over 2,000 published and unpublished articles, papers and reports over more than a 10 year period. They then reviewed all these studies looking for studies that used strong statistical methods to measure the relationship between parental involvement and academic success.

Twenty five studies met their criteria. Within these 25 studies, ninety-two variables of parental involvement and students' academic achievement were found.

They then grouped these 92 variables into 5 broad categories of parental involvement and 3 categories of student academic achievement. The categories of parent involvement were *parent-child communication*, *home supervision*, *educational aspiration for children*, *school contact* and *participation*. The categories of student academic achievement were *overall grades (GPA)*, *test scores in individual subjects* and *grade promotion*.

The researchers then looked for relationships between these categories of parental involvement and student academic success.

What did they learn?

Overall, parent involvement does have an effect on student academic achievement.

Parents' aspiration and expectation for children's educational achievement had the strongest relationship with student achievement.

Parents' supervision of children at home had the weakest relationship with students' academic achievement. One explanation for this weaker link may be that parents may provide closer supervision if a student is not succeeding or struggling.

General school achievement, such as GPA, may be a better indicator for students' overall academic achievement than those that focused on a specific academic area. (e.g., math grade or reading tests score). GPA is a measure of multiple subjects and this composite maybe a more reliable indicator of student success than any one individual subject grades.

This brief summary was prepared from:

Xitao Fan, Michael Chen; (2001) *Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*, Educational Psychology Review, 13 (1), 1-22

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