

“Show me how this helps teachers teach and children learn.”

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DECISION MAKING YARDSTICK  
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## WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION *In Relation to Academic Achievement*

### Where Children Spend Their Time

- School age children spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school.<sup>1</sup>

### When Parents Should Get Involved

- The earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects.<sup>2</sup>
- The most effective forms of parent involvement are those, which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home.<sup>3</sup>

### Impact

- 86% of the general public believes that support from parents is the most important way to improve the schools.<sup>4</sup>
- Lack of parental involvement is the biggest problem facing public schools.<sup>5</sup>
- Decades of research show that when parents are involved students have<sup>6</sup>:
  - Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
  - Better school attendance
  - Increased motivation, better self-esteem
  - Lower rates of suspension
  - Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
  - Fewer instances of violent behavior
- Family participation in education was *twice* as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were *10 times* greater than other factors.<sup>7</sup>
- The more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial the achievement effects.<sup>8</sup>
- The more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level -- in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fundraisers and boosters, as volunteers and para-professionals, and as home teachers -- the better for student achievement.<sup>9</sup>

### Parent Expectations and Student Achievement

- The most consistent predictors of children's academic achievement and social adjustment are parent expectations of the child's academic attainment and satisfaction with their child's education at school.<sup>10</sup>
- Parents of high-achieving students set higher standards for their children's educational activities than parents of low-achieving students.<sup>11</sup>

### Major Factors of Parent Involvement

- Three major factors of parental involvement in the education of their children<sup>12</sup>:
  1. Parents' beliefs about what is important, necessary and permissible for them to do with and on behalf of their children;
  2. The extent to which parents believe that they can have a positive influence on their children's education; and
  3. Parents' perceptions that their children and school want them to be involved.

### Type of Involvement

- Although most parents do not know how to help their children with their education, with guidance and support, they may become increasingly involved in home learning activities and find themselves with opportunities to teach, to be models for and to guide their children.<sup>13</sup>
- When schools encourage children to practice reading at home with parents, the children make significant gains in reading achievement compared to those who only practice at school.<sup>14</sup>
- Parents, who read to their children, have books available, take trips, guide TV watching, and provide stimulating experiences contribute to student achievement.<sup>15</sup>

### Type of Involvement (continued)

- Families whose children are doing well in school exhibit the following characteristics:<sup>16</sup>
  1. **Establish a daily family routine.**  
Examples: Providing time and a quiet place to study, assigning responsibility for household chores, being firm about bedtime and having dinner together.
  2. **Monitor out-of-school activities.**  
Examples: Setting limits on TV watching, checking up on children when parents are not home, arranging for after-school activities and supervised care.
  3. **Model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work.** Examples: Communicating through questioning and conversation, demonstrating that achievement comes from working hard.
  4. **Express high but realistic expectations for achievement.** Examples: Setting goals and standards that are appropriate for children's age and maturity, recognizing and encouraging special talents, informing friends and family about successes.
  5. **Encourage children's development/progress in school.** Examples: Maintaining a warm and supportive home, showing interest in children's progress at school, helping with homework, discussing the value of a good education and possible career options, staying in touch with teachers and school staff.
  6. **Encourage reading, writing, and discussions among family members.**  
Examples: Reading, listening to children read and talking about what is being read.

### Student Interest

- Most students at all levels – elementary, middle, and high school – want their families to be more knowledgeable partners about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting communications between home and school.<sup>17</sup>
- When parents come to school regularly, it reinforces the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family's life.<sup>18</sup>

### School and District Leadership

- The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage parent involvement at school and guide parents in how to help their children at home.<sup>19</sup>
- School initiated activities to help parents change the home environment can have a strong influence on children's school performance.<sup>20</sup>
- Parents need specific information on how to help and what to do.<sup>21</sup>

### Federal and State Requirements

- Parent involvement components are required in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and various federal and state education programs including Early On, Michigan School Readiness Program and Title 1.

### Obstacles

- School activities to develop and maintain partnerships with families decline with each grade level, and drop dramatically at the transition to middle grades.<sup>22</sup>
- Teachers often think that low-income parents and single parents will not or cannot spend as much time helping their children at home as do middle-class parents with more education and leisure time.<sup>23</sup>

### Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement

Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University has developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement. This framework assists educators in developing school and family partnership programs. "There are many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships," she writes. "The main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life."

Epstein's framework defines the six types of involvement and lists *sample practices* or activities to describe the involvement more fully. Her work also describes the *challenges* inherent in fostering each type of parent involvement as well as the expected *results* of implementing them for students, parents, and teachers.

## Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement

1. **PARENTING:** Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
  - Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy).
  - Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
  - Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school.
2. **COMMUNICATING:** Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
  - Conferences with every parent at least once a year.
  - Language translators to assist families as needed.
  - Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.
3. **VOLUNTEERING:** Recruit and organize parent help and support.
  - School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
  - Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families.
  - Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.
4. **LEARNING AT HOME:** Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.
  - Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
  - Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
  - Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.
5. **DECISION MAKING:** Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
  - Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
  - Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
  - Networks to link all families with parent representatives.
6. **COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY:** Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
  - Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs/services.
  - Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

### **National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement**

Building upon the six types of parent involvement identified by Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D., of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University, National PTA created program standards of excellence.

<b>National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs</b>	
<b>Standard I:</b>	Communicating—Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
<b>Standard II:</b>	Parenting—Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
<b>Standard III:</b>	Student Learning—Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
<b>Standard IV:</b>	Volunteering—Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
<b>Standard V:</b>	School Decision Making and Advocacy—Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
<b>Standard VI:</b>	Collaborating with Community—Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

<sup>1</sup> Clark, R.M. (1990). Why Disadvantaged Children Succeed. Public Welfare (Spring): 17-23.

<sup>2</sup> Cotton, K., Wikeland, K., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, School Improvement Research Series. In Parent Involvement in Education.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton, K., Wikeland, K., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, School Improvement Research Series. In Parent Involvement in Education.

<sup>4</sup> Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997

<sup>5</sup> Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997

<sup>6</sup> Parent Teacher Association

<sup>7</sup> Walberg (1984) in his review of 29 studies of school-parent programs.

<sup>8</sup> Cotton, K., Wikeland, K., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, School Improvement Research Series. In Parent Involvement in Education.

<sup>9</sup> Williams, D.L. & Chavkin, N.F. (1989). Essential elements of strong parent involvement programs. Educational Leadership, 47, 18-20

<sup>10</sup> Reynolds, et. al., (6)

<sup>11</sup> Clark (7:85-105)

<sup>12</sup> 1997 Review of Educational Research, a journal of the American Educational Research Association

<sup>13</sup> Roberts, 1992. In Online Resources for Parent/Family Involvement. ERIC Digest by Ngeow, Karen Yeok-Hwa, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Tizard, J.; Schofield, W.N.; & Hewison, J. (1982). Collaboration Between Teachers and Parents in Assisting Children's Reading.

<sup>15</sup> Sattes (5:2)

<sup>16</sup> Henderson (1:9)

<sup>17</sup> Epstein, 1995, p. 703

<sup>18</sup> Steinberg (8)

<sup>19</sup> Dauber and Epstein (11:61)

<sup>20</sup> Leler, H. (1983) Parent Education and Involvement in Relation to the Schools and to Parents of School-aged Children.

<sup>21</sup> Morton-Williams, R. "The Survey of Parental Attitude and Circumstances, 1964."

<sup>22</sup> Epstein, J.L. (1992) School and Family Partnerships.

<sup>23</sup> Epstein J.L. (1984, March). Single Parents and Schools: The effects of marital status Parent and Teacher Evaluations. <sup>23</sup> Clark, R.M. (1990). Why Disadvantaged Children Succeed. Public Welfare (Spring): 17-23.

<sup>23</sup> Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997

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<sup>23</sup> Henderson and Berla, 1994

<sup>23</sup> Walberg (1984) in his review of 29 studies of school-parent programs.

<sup>23</sup> Cotton, K., Wikeland, K., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, School Improvement Research Series. In Parent Involvement in Education.

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