

PARENTS PLUS PARENT INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

The following research facts and key findings are extrapolated from *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002. This book pulls together overarching themes, commonalities, and key findings from over 50 research projects within the last thirty years that focused on parent involvement in education.

STUDIES ON THE IMPACT OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Schools that succeed in engaging families from very diverse backgrounds share three key practices.
 - they focus on building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members
 - recognize, respect, and address families needs, as well as class and cultural differences
 - embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared
- Schools that produced high achievement identify several key characteristics associated with improvement. These include:
 - high standards and expectations for all students and curriculum
 - high standards in instruction
 - effective leadership
 - frequent monitoring of teaching and learning
 - high levels of parent and community involvement
- In schools where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, test scores grew 40% higher than in schools where teachers reported low levels of outreach.
- Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to student achievement.
- Parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving achievement and be designed to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills.
- Parents with high involvement ratings, compared with those with low or median ratings, tended to have children with higher grades and scores. This finding held true across all family income levels and backgrounds.
- Early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten programs that train parents to work with their children at home tend to have significant positive effects.
- The continuity of family involvement at home appears to have a protective effect on children as they progress through our educational system. The more families support their children's learning and educational progress, the more their children tend to do well in school and continue their education.

PARENTS PLUS PARENT INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

The following research facts and key findings are extrapolated from *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002. This book pulls together overarching themes, commonalities, and key findings from over 50 research projects within the last thirty years that focused on parent involvement in education.

STUDIES ON EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO CONNECT SCHOOLS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

- When programs and initiatives focus on building respectful and trusting relationships among school staff, families, and community members, they are effective in creating and sustaining family and community connections with schools.
- Even though school staff thought they welcomed all families, the researchers found that the educators recognized only a narrow band of acceptable behaviors. Teachers liked parents who deferred to them and accepted their opinions about their children.
- Researchers Starkey and Klein (2000) underscore that parent programs and interventions work best when the strategies respect the needs of families.
- The importance of dialogue (“two-way communication”) and respect (“receptivity and openness”) in creating partnerships were emphasized, as well as the leadership of the principal and the support of the district.
- Parent involvement programs that are effective in engaging diverse families recognize, respect, and address cultural and class differences.
- Effective programs to engage families and community embrace a philosophy of partnership. The responsibility for children’s educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members.