



PEN Notes: Fact Sheet #1

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Parent Involvement

Parent involvement means:

- ☞ Including parents in every phase of education and development of the child from birth to adulthood.
- ☞ Including parents in responsibilities and decisions about children's education, health and well-being.
- ☞ Including parents in organizations that support the community's shared ideas for all children.

What the research says about parent involvement:

Parent involvement of almost any kind improves student success and self-esteem. Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills
- Show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

Parental involvement allows parents to keep up to date with school and classroom activities, and to match their efforts with the teacher's efforts. Teachers of students with highly involved parents are more likely to give greater attention to those students, and to spot problems that might delay a student's learning at earlier stages.

The *No Child Left Behind* Act tells schools to inform parents of how they can be involved in school improvement efforts. Parents are provided with local report cards of schools in their district to help guide their involvement.

Six Types of Parent Involvement include:

1. **Parenting:** Help all families establish home settings that support children as students.
2. **Communicating:** Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
3. **Volunteering:** Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and help are wanted.
4. **Learning at home:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other school-related activities and decisions.
5. **Decision making:** Parents are full partners in the decisions that deal with children and families.
6. **Collaborating with community:** Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.



(Sources: Joyce L. Epstein, PhD., of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University and the National PTA standards of excellence.)

Why do schools need parent and community support?



Thirty years of research clearly shows that parent and community involvement in schools improves student achievement. To reach their potential, students need parents and the community to take an active role in their education. Parent and community involvement is extremely important in creating great schools.

- ✓ When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for the future, and make sure that out-of-school activities are positive, their children do better in school.
- ✓ When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, and support parent involvement at home and school, students make greater gains.
- ✓ When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns, value their support, and share power, they are able to form relationships meant to improve student achievement.
- ✓ And when families and communities organize to hold poorly performing schools responsible, school districts make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources.

(Source: National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, NCPPIE)

What can parents do to be involved in their child's school?

- **Meet the teacher:** Tell the teacher about your child's interests and hobbies. Let him/her know how and when it is best to reach you. Ask how you can support your child's learning at home.
- **Make a date with the teacher to visit your child's classroom:** See if the children are busy learning, exploring, and asking questions.
- **Go to parent-teacher conferences:** If the school doesn't have conferences, set your own meeting with your child's teachers. Ask how your child is doing and review his/her work.
- **Join the PTA or other parent group:** Go to school events like back-to-school night. As a group, visit with the principal to find out what the school's goals are and look for ways to help teachers and students reach those goals.
- **Stay up-to-date on school policies, schedules, and rules.** Ask about ways you can be included in the development of school policies.
- **Make sure that your child is learning:** See that your child is learning what s/he needs to know to meet the standards set for his/her grade level.

(Source: National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, NCPPIE)

As a parent, or an adult who plays an important role in the life of a child, your involvement in your child's education at school and at home shows your child that you value education. You are the most reliable source of information about your child. The partnership between you and your child's teachers is powerful!