



Benefits of Family Involvement to the School Community

There are many benefits to family involvement in schools for students, teachers and the school community documented in research. Many researchers maintain that the more parents are involved in their children's education, the greater the effect on achievement.

Epstein (1995) describes six types of parental involvement in schools:

1. **Parenting:** The basic obligations of parents include housing, health, nutrition, and safety for their children. Parents also create the home conditions for learning at all levels.
2. **Communicating:** The basic obligations of schools include school-to-home communication (such as memos, notices, newsletters, report cards, conferences, and phone calls) and information (on schools, courses, programs, and activities). Parents provide home-to-school communication, making a two-way channel for interaction and exchange.
3. **Volunteering:** Parents volunteer their time and talents at school activities and fundraising.
4. **Learning at Home:** Parents help their children with homework and with setting educational goals.
5. **Decision Making:** Parents participate in school councils, organizations and school decisions on policy, leadership, and advocacy.
6. **Collaborating with the Community:** Parents encourage partnerships with community resources and services.

Benefits to Teachers

Relationships with teachers are positively affected when families are involved. When parents are given a voice, they feel respected and valued; teachers are better able to create supportive systems for children when working together with families; this encourages student learning. When parents feel supported, listened to and respected, they are better able to approach teachers when an issue arises.

Studies (Henderson & Berla, 1994) have documented benefits of parent and family involvement for teachers also included:

- Improved teacher morale
- Higher ratings of teachers by parents
- Students have more positive attitudes and behavior

According to Epstein (1995), support from families in the home environment has the following impacts on teachers:

- Better design of homework assignments
- Respect of family time
- Recognition of equal helpfulness of single parent, dual-income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning
- Satisfaction with family involvement and support



Benefits to the School

The benefits to family involvement don't stop with teachers. The whole school is positively impacted when families are involved in schools.

According to Henderson and Berla (1994), schools that work well with families have:

- Improved teacher morale
- More support from families
- Higher student achievement
- Better reputations in the community

Communication is Key

Consider how your school engages families. How are families engaged? How are families informed of parent nights, school council, and other school events where families are invited?

What modes of communication are used with families and how can these improve?

- o Social media
- o Newsletter
- o Phone calls
- o School Website, Blogs, D2L

For more information on communication strategies with families – see our resource on “Using Effective Communication with Families”.

References

Epstein, J. (1995, May). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76 (9), 701-12.

Henderson, A., & Berla, N. (Eds.). (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education, Center for Law and Education.