

How does parent involvement in education affect children's learning?

Parents' involvement in children's education has several forms. Parents who are **behaviourally involved** participate in activities such as attending school functions and volunteering at the school. Parents who are **cognitively involved** expose their children to stimulating activities and materials, such as reading books or visiting cultural institutions. Parents who are **personally involved** communicate positively with their children about school matters. They convey that they value school and expect their children to do well.

Many studies report on the effects of parent involvement on children's standardized achievement test scores, school grades, and school-based behaviour. What is the effect of parent involvement on children's learning? Answers depend on the type of parent involvement, type of learning outcome, and characteristics of families.

As a whole, research suggests parents can have a positive effect on children's learning by being involved in their schooling. However,

- Parent involvement has a greater impact on elementary students than on secondary students.
- Involvement of minority parents has more impact than the involvement of parents from the cultural/ethnic majority.
- Involvement of parents of low socioeconomic status has greater impact than involvement of parents of high socioeconomic status.
- Parent involvement has a greater impact on school grades than on standardized achievement test scores.
- Parents' personal involvement has more impact on children's academic outcomes than parents' behavioural involvement.
- Although parents' behavioural involvement has little effect on children's academic achievement it helps prevent behaviour problems.

Canadian educators and policy makers should continue to encourage and support parent involvement in education with particular attention to minority and low-income parents. All stakeholders, including parents, should be aware that the most effective form of involvement for supporting children's learning is personal involvement; that is, parents communicating positively with children about school to convey that they value education and expect their children to do well

**For online resources as well as the research references that inform this issue, please visit:
www.cea-ace.ca/facts-on-education**

The Facts on Education Series is produced with a generous sponsorship from the Canadian School Boards Association.

Copyright information: You are free to reproduce and distribute this material in any form provided that you reproduce the entire commentary and credit it to the CEA and SFU.