



Family and Consumer Sciences

Family Ties

School, Children, Internet

Parental School Involvement Improves Child's Academic Performance



Researcher report:

- * Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance, and are more likely to complete secondary school than students whose parents are not involved in their school.
- * Parental involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities, and to coordinate their efforts with teachers. Teachers of students with highly involved parents tend to give greater attention to those students, and they tend to identify problems that might inhibit student learning at earlier stages.
- * Students perform better in school if their fathers as well as their mothers are involved, regardless of whether the father lives with the student or not.

Parental involvement in school, as measured by attendance at a general meeting, a meeting with a teacher, or a school event, and by volunteering or serving on a committee, rose significantly between 1999 and 2003. In 2003, 88 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade had parents who attended a general meeting, compared with 78 percent in 1999. Seventy-seven percent of students had parents who attended a scheduled meeting with a teacher, 70 percent had parents who attended a school event, and 42 percent of students had parents who volunteered in school or served on a committee in 2003, compared with 73 percent, 65 percent, and 37 percent, respectively, in 1999.

Differences by Grade

Parents are most likely to attend school meetings and events or to volunteer in their child's school when their children are in primary school.. For example, in 2003, a little over 90 percent of students in kindergarten through fifth grade had parents who attended a meeting with their teachers, while 75 percent of middle school students, 59 percent of ninth through tenth grades students, and 53 percent of eleventh through twelfth grade students had parents who had done so.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03*. Washington, DC:

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Encouraging Children To Do Well In School



Parents, teachers, and childcare providers want the children in their care to do well in school. They also want these children to feel good about themselves. One way adults can help children in their care is by providing encouragement. However, giving encouragement is not as easy as it sounds.

The Edmonton Area Child and Family Services Alberta (Canada) offers some great suggestions for encouraging your children.

- * Repair mistakes. Children need to know that mistakes are not bad, but they are necessary to learning. Instead of despairing about their mistakes, help children to understand they can repair their mistakes. Help them to think about what they can do to fix the problem. Repairing the child's mistake is not the parents' job—it is the child's. For example, if a child breaks a neighbor's window, the parent can help the child to think about possible solutions, but it should be the child who carries them out, whether it be to pay for the window, do chores for the neighbor to make up for the broken window, or help with replacing the window.
- * Acknowledge improvement. Learning is a process. We rarely get something perfect the first time we do it. When children are acknowledged for the progress they are making instead of waiting until the job is perfect, they are encouraged to keep on trying.
- * Avoid pity. Feeling sorry for children may cause them to feel sorry for themselves. Instead, show you understand their feelings, but you know they can get through it.
- * Avoid comparisons. Respect the individual differences in your children. When you compare children, you make the one who is discouraged feel even more hopeless. Recognize the unique abilities and talents of each child, and help them to build on their strengths.
- * Avoid competition. Teach children the “value of doing rather than out-doing.” Giving children opportunities to be part of a team where everyone contributes can help them feel useful.
- * Help the child feel valuable. Ask children's opinions, let them teach you how to do something, encourage them to help others. These will improve their self-esteem.
- * Treat the child with respect. Knock on the bedroom door before entering, don't embarrass them in front of their friends, acknowledge their feelings—the good and the bad.
- * Share time with the child. Children spell love “TIME.” Adults should plan time to spend with children individually. Notice when children do things right and compliment them. Make sure you take time to enjoy each other.
- * Give unconditional love. Make sure your children know that you love them for who they are—not for what they do or don't do. Let them know that perfection is not a requirement for receiving your love.
- * Help children be responsible for their own encouragement. Teach children to use positive self-talk—I can handle this, I am a worthwhile person, I know I am loved. Encourage them to avoid negative self-talk—I am stupid, I can't do anything, I am worthless.

You can find this information and more at the Edmonton Area Child and Family Services Alberta Website at <http://www.edmontonandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca/>.



DO YOU KNOW THE DANGERS - INTERNET AND TEENS

The Internet is a great place . . .not only is it fun, but it lets you keep in touch with friends and family and provides an enormous amount of information. There are lots of great educational sites as well as places to keep up with your favorite hobbies, music, sports, and much more. However, the internet also can bring danger to your family if it is not monitored. Chatrooms are can be the most dangerous Internet tool. A chatroom is where you “talk” to other people, usually using a screen name which is not your real name.

If you’re the parent or guardian of a teenager, you need to be aware of all the different types of website which can be assessed from the Internet. Many of the site may offer educational information and good clean entertainment. . . however, some sites are very inappropriate for children and teen because of their messages or images that are indecent, lewd, or obscene. You need to talk to your teens about internet dangers and monitor all the computers in your home. Teenagers are actually more likely to get into trouble online than younger children. Teens are more likely to explore; they’re more likely to reach out to others besides their peers; and, sadly, they’re more often preyed upon as victims by child molesters and other exploiters.

Talk with your teens about what they can and cannot do online

Be reasonable and set reasonable expectations. Try to understand their needs, interests, and curiosity. But at the same time. . . you must protect your teens well-being.

Be open with your teens, and encourage them to come to you if they encounter a problem online

If your kids tell you about someone or something they encountered, work with them to help them avoid problems. Remember, how you respond will determine whether they confide in you the next time they encounter a problem. It will also shape how they learn to deal with problems on their own.

Learn everything you can about the internet

Ask your teens to show you what’s cool. Have them show you great places for teens and fill you in on areas you may benefit from as well. Make “surfing the Net” a family experience. Use it to plan a vacation, pick out a movie, or check out other family activities. Make this one area where you get to be the student and your child gets to be the teacher.

Internet Filters

It is important to realize filtering programs cannot protect your child from all online dangers. To begin with, no program can possibly block out every inappropriate site. What’s more, it’s possible, in some cases, for the programs to block sites that are appropriate. If you use a filtering program, you should re-evaluate it periodically to make sure it’s working for your family.

Internet Harassment and Bullying

You and your teen need to be aware of harassment and bullying which can occur online. When you or your teen is online, especially in bulletin boards or chatrooms, you may get messages that are mean or hurtful. Don’t take it personally. Sometimes even people who are nice in the “real” world can forget their manners when online. What’s the best thing to do if you encounter such messages or people who send them? Ignore them. If someone sends you messages or images that are indecent or obscene with the intent to abuse, annoy, harass, or threaten you, **report** it. Tell your Internet service provider and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children’s CyberTipline at www.cybertipline.com or by calling 1-800-843-5678. You should also report it to school authorities if the incident took place at school or involved other students from your school.

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Tips for Better Brown Bag Lunches



A whole lot of people eat brown bag lunches . . . and if you don't brown bag it yourself, but you may make lunches for your kids, spouse or just on an occasional basis. List below are some tips to make brown bag lunches more exciting, safer and more convenient.

- **Zip Those Chips:** Instead of costly pre-made single serving packs, use sealable plastic bags and even mix up your favorites. Some of them, like those tasty bean chips, vegetable chips and garlic bagel chips, don't come in single server packs.
- **Stop the Sog:** If you are using moist vegetables or condiments, bag them separately then add them to a sandwich at lunch. No more yucky bread.
- **Fast food packets:** Next time you eat fast-food (and we know you do), pick up extra packets of ketchup, mustard, salt, pepper, salsa, etc. They are handy for adding flavor to your meal. Condiments can make a sandwich soggy, so adding them fresh from the packet will make your meal tastier.
- **Baby-wipes:** Those pre-moistened wipes can clean messy hands gently. Keep a box at work or in your kid's desk or locker. Also good for wiping up your desk.
- **Don't Forget Your Lunch:** Drop your car keys in the bag. You'll never get to work without them.
- **Wash your lunch box:** Bacteria can grow anywhere, so be sure to clean your box or bag out regularly. Safety first.
- **Ice packs:** a number of reusable ice packs exist, but you can also freeze those little individual juice containers and let them thaw until lunch time.
- **Cookie cutter sandwiches:** Make these with your kids. Slice the crusts off the bread and use cookie cutters in fun shapes. Pack a few extra to share with friends.
- **Mail Bags:** This is fun for kids: include some mail for them. A note from you, a newspaper clipping, even a piece of junk mail you don't plan on opening (kids love to open things!) How about printing out something fun from the Web and including it?
- **Stickers:** If you use brown paper bags, decorate them with stickers, especially at holidays. This is not just for kids, because adults love to show off that something special sent from home, too. And there's such a variety of theme-oriented and playful stickers these days.
- **Joke-a-Day:** Do you have one of those joke a day calendars? Keep the old ones and throw 'em in your family lunch bags. The day may be gone but the joke's still good.
- **Silly Pasta Salads:** Pasta now comes in all sorts of fun shapes: basketballs, grape clusters, Christmas trees...Make pasta salads using these silly shapes, and the kids will especially love them.
- **REMEMBER . . .** Always keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold!!