

How to Engage Parents

- Create a warm atmosphere.
- Meet parents face to face.
- Leadership has to embrace the idea of parental involvement.
- Focus on building trusting collaborative relationships.
- Recognize, respect, and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural difference.
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared.
- Understand that there are six ways that parents can be involved. And not all six need to be done but enough has to be done to ensure student success.
- Listen to them.
- Get parental input.

Impact

- Outreach to parents was related to strong and consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math.
- Effective parent outreach practices included meeting face to face, sending materials home, and keeping in touch about progress.
- Workshops for parents on helping their children at home are linked to higher reading and math scores.
- Family participation in education was twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were 10 times greater than other factors.
- Decades of research show that when parents are involved students have:
 - Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
 - Better school attendance
 - Increased motivation, better self-esteem
 - Lower rates of suspension
 - Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
 - Fewer instances of violent behavior
- The more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial the achievement effects.
- The more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level -- in advocacy, decision making and oversight roles, as fund-raisers and boosters, as volunteers and para-professionals, and as home teachers -- the better for student achievement.