

Parental Involvement in Efficient Education for Building a Strong Nation

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Abstract: *Parental involvement in efficient education for buildup a strong Nation has been a much discussed concept by parents, teachers and policy-makers alike. In this paper is an attempt to highlight that parental involvement is a complex matter. A parent's role is to support their child's efficient education. Support the schools and be pro active in their child's efficient education for buildup a Strong Nation. Express concerns with the teacher. Be a partner in the schools. Know your child's educational strengths and weaknesses. So the parent can work with their child on the skills they are lacking.*

The question arises though is parent involvement more than just a "feel good" idea? Does parental involvement really work? The present paper (a) discusses research evidence that indicates the major role parent involvement & school family partnerships play, in improving children's efficient education for buildup a Strong Nation. (b) Improve social & emotional learning & prevention of high risk behavior for buildup a Strong Nation. (c) Identify the fundamental barriers to meaningful parental involvement in efficient education and (d) The possible ways of overcoming these barriers in efficient education.

Keywords: *parental involvement, efficient education, children, fundamental barriers, academic achievement.*

I. Introduction

Right now, when getting a good efficient education has never been more important - and when school resources are stretched as thin as most of us can ever remember - it is essential to make sure that parents are fully engaged in the efficient education of their children, both at home and at school and also plays an important role for buildup a Strong Nation.

There is no question that parent and family involvement has a profound influence on children's efficient education yet school improvement and reform efforts to date have focused almost entirely on what happens in school buildings and on what school staff can do.

It is time to get serious about enlisting parents in the efficient education of their children. Becher (1994) in her extensive review of the literature on parent involvement, has pointed out that involved parents develop more positive attitudes about school and school personnel, help gather support in the community for the programs, become more active in community affairs, develop increased self confidence, and enroll in other educational programs.

Overall, research has consistently shown that parental involvement in children's efficient education does make a positive difference to pupil's achievement and education. The children's plan published by the department for children, schools and families (DCSF) in 2007 also highlights the importance of partnership between parents and schools to support children provided for parents to involve them in their child's efficient education. (in the early years and throughout school)

The purpose of this paper is to look at the issue of parental involvement in efficient education for buildup a Strong Nation. There are in fact several types of parental involvement: parents can participate as recipients, educators, non institutional volunteers, decision makers and so on. In spite of the great importance attached to parental involvement, parents and schools face Many barriers realizing this involvement.

II. What Is Parental Involvement In Children's Efficient Education

Most children have two main educators in their lives - their parents and their teachers. Parents are the prime educators until the child attends and early years setting or start school and they remain a major influence on their children's efficient education throughout school and beyond. The school and parents both have crucial roles to play. So parent involvement is a crucial force in children's development, learning and success at school and in life. Decades of research in the area of family involvement have time and again supported the simple fact that children of involved parents have a much greater chance to develop into healthy, knowledgeable, responsible, and caring adults. "parent involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring that (a) parents play an integral role in assisting their child's efficient education (b) parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; and (c) parents are full partners in their child's efficient

education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the efficient education of their child” [title IX section 9 10 1(32)].



Figure 1

III. Does Parental Involvement In Children’s Efficient Education, Really Work?

Parents, teachers and policy makers agree that parent involvement is an essential ingredient to children’s efficient education. A number of studies show that parental involvement in education has several positive effects on student’s achievement, home school and school-community relationship.

Henderson (2002) documents dozens of major studies and programs which describe the importance of parental involvement in children’s efficient education. Some of the positive effects of parental involvement as demonstrated in these studies are: **improved student cognitive performance, improved student behavior and attitude toward school, improved school climates and improved school community relations [5].**

So, all children get benefit from parent involvement in efficient education, even if it’s to a lesser extent, or in a different way than you might expect. In fact, the important of parental involvement in efficient education is difficult to overstate. Home learning activates undertaken by parent is more important for children’s intellectual and social development than potential occupation efficient, education or income. First consider academic outcomes like good grades and **motivation to do well**. It’s true that on these outcomes children who are struggling academically and/or who believe that they’re not good at school benefit the most from parental involvement. Children who are highly academically competent seem to do quite well regardless of their parent’s input.

IV. Types Of Parental Involvement

A number of writers and researchers have attempted to categorize various types of parental involvement in efficient education.

Bloom (1992) proposes a comprehensive categorization of the types of parental involvement [1] Parent, in her model, can play seven types of critical roles at three levels: The levels are: 1) involvement with their own child’s education, 2) participation in school life, 3) advocacy. The following summary exhibits parents’ role at each level:

Involvement

- Parent-as-spectator monitors child’s progress, check homework, reads school memos and report cards, and attend school-initiated meetings.
- Parent-as-teacher actively assists child with homework, establishes home instruction routines to augment or reinforce school curriculum, and periodically assesses child’s progress.

Participation

- Parent-as-accessory-volunteer helps out with field trips, provides no classroom support services, disseminates school information via newsletters and phone chains, and conducts fundraising activities.
- Parent-as-educational-volunteer serves as an aide to the teacher in the classroom, checks homework and other assignment listens to children read, and provides remedial tutoring.
- Parent-as-employee works as a paid employee of the school in any of the above capacities.

Advocacy

- Parent-as-decision maker/policymaker functions as an integral part of the administrative structure, participating as a voting member of school councils or steering committees, mobilizing other parents around specific issues, and serving as monitor of the changes that result.
- Parent-as-mover-and-shaker functions as an independent force to initiate, implement, and monitor basic changes in the school structure, on a local, district, or statewide level (p.21).

V. Relationship Between Parental Involvement & Children's Efficient Education

Research has indicated that there are positive correlation between parental involvement and children's efficient education.

For example:

- Evidence indicates that parental involvement continues to have a significant effect on achievement into adolescence and even adulthood. (Gaitan C.D. 2004) [4]
- It has been shown that children whose parents are involved in early childhood (or) participate with their children in early childhood programs, such as head start, have higher cognitive and language skills than do children whose families are not involved or part of such programs.
- Also, children who participate in early childhood programs that had strong family collaboration are more likely to be better prepared for school, most importantly; benefits continue to be evident even later, as these children have fewer grade retentions and are more likely to graduate from high school.
- However, studies have indicated that high school students believe they can do better at school if they know that their families are interested in their schoolwork and expect them to succeed, thus challenging the prevalent view that adolescents do not want their parents involved at all.
- All children seem to suffer emotionally if their parents are uninvolved in their efficient education. For instance, one study found that the more after mothers were involved in their children's schoolwork, the less negative their kids tended to feel. Researchers believe that children feel more connected to their parents when their parents are involved with their schoolwork. This sense of connection may have far reaching effects, including benefits for children's self esteem, personality development and social functioning.

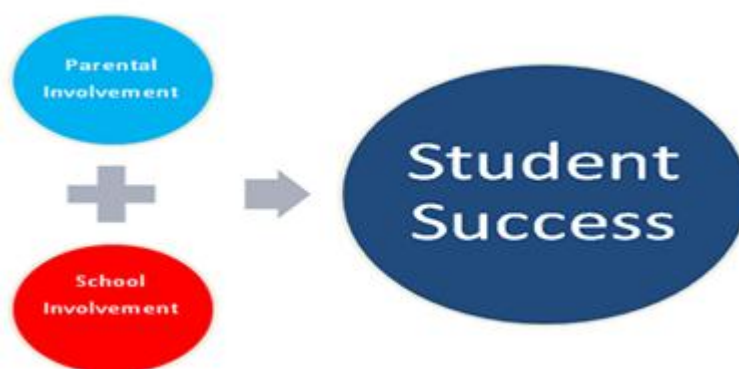


Figure 2

VI. Parental Involvement, Social & Emotional Learning & Prevention Of High Risk Behaviour For Buildup A Strong Nation

In several studies researchers have acknowledged the value that social and emotional factors have on learning and academic achievement. More recently, these factors have been recognized for their own merits and for the important role they play in academic success (J.H.Walberg 2005) [11] For example, children who participated in early childhood programs whose families were actively involved displayed much less delinquent behavior later in life than those who did not. Also, adolescents who are supported at home and at school display more positive attitudes about school, better attendance and behavior, and increased class preparation.

Also, social and emotional learning is shown to be fundamental to children's academic learning, social and emotional development, health, mental well-being, motivation to achieve, and citizenship. Social and emotional learning is the process of understanding how to recognize and manage your emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationship with adults and peers, and handle challenging situations effectively (CASEL, 2003). Social and emotional types of learning have been shown to improve understanding of academic subject matter, increase motivation to learn and commitment to school, reduce anxiety, enhance attention, and improve study skills and time devoted to school work, as well as improve attendance and graduation rates.

These findings on social and emotional learning become even more important considering all the risks, including drug use and violence, facing schools, families, and students today, Preventing such risky behaviors involves many factors; one of them is the involvement of parents. It is imperative that, through their relationship with schools, parents become aware of their great positive influence and preventive power. Major prevention efforts such as the National Youth anti-Drug Media Campaign, a historic initiative to educate and empower all youth to reject illegal drugs launched in 1998, underlines the important role parents play in prevention that

works. The campaign's motto, Parents: The Anti-Drug, rejects the critical importance of parent involvement in children's and youths' healthy development (<http://theantdrug.com>).

The bottom line: Research evidence supports the view that parent involvement plays a major role in improving children's efficient education, learning and behavior. Children whose parents are involved in their learning do better at school, both academically and behaviorally.

VII. Barriers To Parental Involvement In Children's Efficient Education

There are three broad types of parent involvement: (1) involvement at home, (2) involvement at school, (3) and home school communication. Communication is the key element that shapes parent involvement activities at home and at school and enhances school family collaboration. Two way communication between home and school helps build an on-going, productive, and trusting relationship between parents and educators, which increases parent participation in learning activities both at home and at school.

There are several barriers that affect the frequency and way in which parents become involved in their child's education at home and at school and collaborate with schools. This section, will first provide an overview of such barriers and give parent teacher and administrator perspectives.

Research Has Highlighted The Major Barriers To Engagement, These Include: Parent's Perception Of Barriers To Parental Involvement In Children's Efficient Education.

1) Time

Parents who work, fathers, or single parents can find time a key barrier to engaging with school. Furthermore, time is a key factor restricting parental engagement in their children's efficient education more generally.

2) Language & Literacy Barriers

Parents who do not speak English fluently or who cannot read or write well, face obvious barriers to communicating with schools and supporting their children with homework. Many parents of cultural minority groups also face language barriers.

3) Social & Cultural Experiences

Parents may feel that they lack the skills or knowledge to help their children at home or engage with schools staff. Parents who had negative experiences of their own education may feel intimidated and alienated by the school environment (DCSF 2009, Williams et al 2002). Working class parents are particularly likely to feel less confident or less entitled in engaging with schools or making demands on teachers, which is likely to inhibit their involvement and visibility in the school. There is a need for "equitable dialogue" between schools and parents (Crozier and Reay 2005, p-159)

4) Cynicism/ Parents Fears

Some parents may feel that they do not have the power to influence their children's school and thus feel reluctant to engage. Parent's fears that the school staff will not respect their privacy and that of their child fear that sensitive and confidential information about their child will become known in the community.

5) Lack Of Work Responsibilities

Some parents do not take responsibility for monitoring the child's school work, medications, etc at home.

6) Lack Of Time, Two Way, Partnership

Parent's fear of communicating, or their inability to communicate their concerns to school personal. Lack of true and 2-way, communication between parents and school personal. In many cases school staff talk and parents simply listen.

7) Health Problem, Economic Differences Between Parents And Teachers, Negative Experiences With School

These various, parent perspective barriers impact differently according to parent's gender ethnicity and social class.

Teacher's Perception Of Barriers To Parental Involvement

Leitch and Tangri (1988) [9] report that the major barriers which teachers cite one-

1. Parent's unrealistic expectations of the school's role.
2. Large families.

3. Parent's attitude that school is not important enough to take time from work.
4. Parent's inability to help with the school work.
5. Parental jealousy of teacher's upward mobility.
6. Apathy of long time teachers and their lack of responsiveness to parents.
7. Absence of activities to draw parents in and.
8. Teacher's resentment or suspicion of parents who are involved.

Administrator's Perception Of Barriers To Parental Involvement.

Research reveals that although administrators support the general idea of parental involvement, they consider parental involvement in school policy decisions such as the hiring and firing of teachers and principals or in the determination of priorities for the school budget. They perceive a lack of training on the part of parents to make decisions as one of the barriers in involving parents in shared decision-making activities (Chavkin et al. 1987)

The Education System As A Barrier

Davies (1987) [2] mentions some of the special characteristics of school that inhibit parental involvement:

- The goals of schools as organization are diffuse, multifaceted, and subject to widely varied interpretations.
- The "technology" of achieving goals is fragmented with responsibilities divided among administrators, counselor, classroom teachers, teaching specialists, families, and the students themselves, and the connections between a particular activity and a particular desired goal are often uncertain.
- The informal norms of school organizations are particularly powerful. The norms and specialized language of teachers as a professional group are buttressed by teacher training and by their professional associations and unions. One such norm is in decision making.
- The formal structure of schools is unique. The various levels of decision making activity-federal, state, country, district, school, and classroom-operate relatively independently of one another, with limited coordination and control. As many have pointed out, public education is a loosely coupled system. This means that mandates from one level to another are never self-enforcing... (p.159)

The most sensitive and explosive aspect of parental involvement seems to be parents involvement decision making. This requires a major deviation from standard operating procedures and introduces a strong element of risk into the organization. The regular flow of decision making may be interrupted, and there is a risk that parents will achieve too much power or create conflict. Any activity beyond the current repertoire of school activities demands for training and experience on the part of teachers and administrators. It poses a threat to administrators, ability to manage change and also to teachers professional autonomy, thus, the tendency is to discourage parents, involvement decision making.

VIII. Suggestion For Overcoming Barriers To Parental Involvement In Children's Efficient Education

Literature reveals that researchers have identified various ways where the barriers to parental involvement could in children's efficient education possibly be removed and better home school relationship could be established. Some of these means are-

1. Empowerment Of Parents

The mandatory involvement of parents in education will empower them to be equal partners in decision making. At the same time such empowerment will require them to be equipped with the kind of knowledge and skills necessary for dealing with educational issues in broader terms.

2. Administrator's Support

a number of ways where by administrators can promote parental involvement in education (a) these include collaborating with parents to develop a clear statement about the goals of parental involvement (b) formalizing and documenting policies encouraging parental involvement by involving teachers and parents (c) participating in parental involvement training activities (d) ensuring that parents are involved at all levels of the educational system (e) establishing the framework for parental involvement programs in a sequential form (f) and making available the appropriate kinds of resources for parental involvement efforts. (like hand books, newsletters, news briefs).

3. Home School Interdependency

Liontos (1991), focusing on involvement of at risk families, identifies various ways for parental involvement. In his opinion, at risk programs should be grounded in the understanding that school and families

are jointly responsible and mutually dependent. Successful programs, he stresses, emphasize the strengths of parents and value them. They acknowledge that parents care about their children and help parents to identify what they are capable of doing and how to overcome obstacles. Successful programs also empower parents by asking them what they would be interested in. Thus working with their agendas first and training them to be part of their school's decision making groups would enhance their participation.

4. Awareness of current research on parental involvement

Mcafee (1987) asserts that administrators and policymakers need to be aware of current research that shows the positive benefits of working closely with families, and of the way school policies and attitudes may influence the school achievement of children

5. Need For Structure

Lombana (1983) thinks that the best way to enhance parental involvement is to develop a structure for partnership. In his view, one hindrance to effective partnership has been the lack of such organized structure of a model from which to operate.

6. Reaching Out To Newcomers

Lutz and Merz (1992) define newcomers as those groups which had previously felt powerless and underrepresented, including cultural minorities. They suggest that new relationships be built to meet the changing demands and shifting the power structure. They assert that leaders must develop ways of reaching out to these groups in the community to build lines of communication, because they bring beliefs and expectations about education from their previous communities that can have major impact on schools.

7. Other means

Davies (1983) found, in his research study, that a number of strategies to involve parents in education. [2] Davies strategies include parent associations, individual parent consultation, individual service projects, individual learning contracts, back to school nights, school open house, class visits, parent resource rooms in school or in teacher centers, parent training workshop and courses , student participation in community organizations and agencies, mandated parent advisory councils for categorical programs, and school advisory committees, councils, policy boards both district wide and school site levels.

Facilitators to effective parent-school involvement include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular open communication with teachers, counselors • Teachers who are easy for parents and others working with parents to talk with. • School that are sensitive to the family's needs. • School with support groups to help students and families deal with common problems, i.e., the death of a loved one. • Mutual respect of parent and school staff for one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support groups for parents, sponsored by the school or other agency. • School who understand that most parents do think education is a priority. • Schools that build parent's skills and help them communicate effectively with their child's school. • Trust, loyalty, and mutual support are key elements that underlie family-school relationships and make it possible to work together.

Table 1

A final note about the value of working with parents to help their children succeed:

Schools often see children's problems as rooted in their dysfunctional families. But new horizons counselors say the process of helping children succeed in school aids families as well. One a family can pull itself together to help a child do well in school; everything else seems to fall into place.

IX. Conclusion

School-family partnerships take time and effort to establish and maintained. There are concrete steps that schools can take in order to reach out to parents in a positive and ongoing way. But that is not enough. Since school-family partnerships are a two-way street, parents must build on the school's efforts, or initiate their own, and collaborate with teachers in a productive way for the success of all children.

1. Parent involvement is all about the children.
2. Parent involvement boosts student achievement.
3. Communication with parents must be carefully planned and two-way.
4. It is important to treat parents as partners instead of as clients.
5. Parent trust in your school is required for student achievement.
6. Parent involvement barriers are real- and must be addressed.
7. School staff makes all the difference in parent involvement.
8. It is important to make sure you don't have a parent involvement disconnect.

9. It is important to know why parents say they are not more involved.

There is nothing technically challenging or budget-prohibitive about parent and family involvement. Simple steps, a focus on children, good communication, mutual respect, earning trust, overcoming easily identifiable barriers and keeping the entire staff involved are what it's all about. Home school and community are interdependent in creating an enabling environment for efficient education of children's and in shaping or reshaping the STRONG NATION.

Parental Involvement Acts As the Wool upon Which Depends the Very Existence of the Fabric

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Internet Resources

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- [4]. National Education Association: <http://www.nea.org/parents/index.html>
- [5]. National Network of Partnership School: <http://csos.jhu.edu/n2000>
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