

The Role of Parents in Education. How to Support Your Child's Learning At Home

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Abstract

Parental involvement in a child's education has consistently been shown to have significant benefits for students' academic achievement, motivation, behavior, social-emotional development, and lifelong success. While schools are the primary setting for formal instruction, the home environment and family support systems play an indispensable role in reinforcing learning and nurturing skills. This paper examines the extensive body of research on the impact of parental involvement across various ages and grade levels. It explores how targeted practices like establishing learning routines, actively encouraging academic growth, and motivating achievement can positively contribute to children's education at home. Specific evidence-based strategies are outlined for implementing supportive involvement, including discussing schoolwork, establishing homework routines, guiding problem-solving, sharing literacy activities, communicating with teachers, and modeling passion for learning. The paper emphasizes how involvement necessarily evolves as children mature into adolescence but remains critically important. It concludes that reciprocal commitment from both parents and schools provides children with the richest, most well-rounded education enabling them to fulfill their fullest potential.

Keywords: child's education, motivation, behavior, modeling.

Introduction

A child's education begins at home, with parents as the first teachers. Parental involvement in education has a significant impact on student outcomes including academic achievement, motivation, behavior, and social-emotional development (Jeynes, 2012). Students with engaged parents tend to have higher grades, test scores, graduation rates, and levels of postsecondary education (Wilder, 2014). Parental involvement also correlates with improved student

attendance, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward school (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Clearly, parents play a crucial role in their children's academic success and overall development.

However, parental involvement declines as children reach adolescence (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Many parents are unsure how to best support middle school and high school students as the learning content advances and becomes more complex. Yet ongoing parental involvement remains important, as "academic socialization" continues to benefit teenagers by influencing motivations, educational goals, and study skills (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). Simple practices such as discussing school activities, helping with homework, emphasizing successes, and collaborating with teachers can significantly improve academic engagement and achievement throughout a child's education (Wilder, 2014).

This paper will examine specific, research-backed techniques parents can implement at home to positively contribute to their children's learning across all grade levels. The practices discussed aim to establish effective routines, encourage growth, and motivate student success. With proactive support from parents, in partnership with schools, children can flourish academically and develop skills critical to lifelong achievement.

A child's education begins at home, with parents as the first and most important teachers. Parental involvement in education has a significant impact on various student outcomes including academic achievement, motivation, behavior, and social-emotional development (Jeynes, 2012). Numerous studies have shown that students with highly engaged parents tend to have higher grades, standardized test scores, graduation rates, and levels of postsecondary education (Wilder, 2014). Parental involvement also strongly correlates with improved student attendance, self-esteem, attitudes toward school, homework completion rates, and reduced risky behaviors (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Clearly, parents play a foundational role in their children's academic success and overall development.

However, research shows that parental involvement declines as children reach adolescence (Shumow & Miller, 2001). Many parents are unsure how to best support middle school and high school students as the learning content advances and becomes more complex. Yet ongoing

parental involvement remains critically important through the teenage years, as “academic socialization” continues to benefit adolescents by influencing motivations, goals, study skills, and learning strategies (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). Simple practices such as discussing school activities, monitoring homework, emphasizing successes, and collaborating with teachers can significantly improve academic engagement and achievement throughout a child’s education (Wilder, 2014).

While parental involvement is important at all grade levels, the forms it takes may evolve as children mature. In early childhood, parents focus on building language, literacy, and math readiness through reading, playful activities, and establishing routines (Hilado et al., 2011). In elementary school, involvement centers on reinforcing lessons, supervising homework, and active communication with teachers (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). By middle and high school, students need less direct oversight but benefit hugely from parents showing interest in their studies, discussing career plans, and helping hone time management and critical thinking skills (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012).

Certain types of involvement also prove more beneficial than others. Encouragement, discussing learning strategies, and making aspirations clear have more impact than direct homework assistance (Patall et al., 2008). Attending school events signifies interest but is less important than interactions at home (Wilder, 2014). Support should enable independence, not inadvertently promote dependence. Overall, an authoritative parenting style, with warmth and accountability, is ideal for academic achievement (Pinquart & Ebeling, 2020).

Socioeconomic status, culture, family structure and other factors certainly influence parental involvement. Barriers like long work hours, language differences, and unfamiliarity with school systems disproportionately affect low-income and ethnic minority families (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Still, meaningful involvement is possible for all families when schools and communities provide access to resources and cultural awareness. Simple practices like reading together transcend demographics.

In overview, substantial research confirms parental involvement benefits children's learning and development from preschool through high school. This paper will examine specific, evidence-based techniques parents can implement at home to support academic growth and motivational resilience. Strategies across three domains will be explored: establishing effective routines, actively encouraging learning, and guiding children's achievement by emphasizing effort over innate ability. With proactive support from parents, in partnership with schools, children can thrive in their education and build skills critical to lifelong success.

1.1 The importance of parental involvement in education

Parental involvement in education is linked to numerous benefits for students including improved academic performance, behavior, motivation, and social-emotional growth (Wilder, 2014). Research consistently shows that students with highly engaged parents earn higher grades, score better on standardized tests, are more likely to pass classes and be promoted to the next grade level, and have higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parental involvement is one of the key predictors of academic success.

1.2 Background on how parental involvement affects academic achievement

Decades of research across all grade levels demonstrates that parental involvement positively influences academic achievement through a variety of mechanisms (Fan & Chen, 2001). Involved parents foster cognitive and linguistic development from an early age by reading to children, using rich language, and exposing them to new concepts (Evans et al., 2004). As children progress through school, parents support academic skills by assisting with homework, communicating expectations, discussing learning strategies, and collaborating with teachers (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). Parental involvement enhances achievement by increasing social capital, improving behavior and attendance, boosting motivation and self-efficacy, and facilitating a school-home learning connection (Topor et al., 2010).

2. Establishing Learning Routines

One of the most important ways parents can support their children's learning at home is by establishing consistent routines and expectations around education. Structure and organization at

home help provide students with the study skills, self-discipline, and sense of accountability they need to thrive academically (Xu et al., 2022). Specific routines parents can implement include:

- Set a regular time each day for homework. Having a consistent schedule for studying helps children focus without distractions and develop good time management skills (Orkin et al., 2022). Dedicate a chunk of time where schoolwork is the priority before any leisure activities.
- Create an organized, quiet study space. Make sure children have a well-lit, comfortable place to complete school assignments with the necessary supplies available (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Minimize noise and other disruptions to allow concentration.
- Assist with homework without doing it for them. Discuss concepts, offer guidance if stuck, double-check work, but avoid simply providing answers (Patall et al., 2008). Explain problem-solving steps rather than solving problems outright.
- Limit media exposure and other distractions during study time (Froiland et al., 2012). Phone, TV, and internet access sidetrack attention. Gently refocus children if they veer off-task.
- Review completed homework together. Going over finished work can reveal areas needing more practice and shows parents what children are learning (Wilder, 2014). Use it as a chance for academic discussions.

Establishing expectations around education and following regular routines lays the foundation for student success by teaching vital organizational and study habits.

2.1 Set Regular Time for Homework

One of the most effective ways parents can support learning at home is by setting a consistent schedule for homework and study time (Orkin et al., 2022). Having a regular, daily window of time devoted specifically to schoolwork helps children develop good time management and focus without distractions (Xu et al., 2010). Dedicate a chunk of time each afternoon or evening when homework is the priority before any leisure activities. Be consistent from day to day and

limit schedule conflicts so studying becomes a habit. Display the schedule visually as a reminder. Routinizing homework promotes self-discipline, responsibility, and strong study skills.

2.2 Provide an Organized, Quiet Place to Study

Designating an organized, quiet space in the home specifically for homework and studying is recommended (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Make sure children have a well-lit, comfortable work area stocked with necessary school supplies and resources (Wilder, 2014). The study space should be free of clutter and distracting noise to allow for concentration. Some students do better at a desk while others prefer reclining on the floor or couch. Let them have input on setup but emphasize that their study area is for focused work, not play. Keep younger siblings occupied elsewhere during scheduled study times.

2.3 Limit distractions during study time

Parents should limit media exposure and other distractions during designated homework and study periods to maximize focus and retention (Froiland et al., 2012). Television, phone/texting, internet surfing, video games, and music with lyrics can significantly sidetrack student attention (Orkin et al., 2022). Gently redirect children if they veer off-task into other activities. For younger students, parents may need to restrict access to distractions altogether while overseeing homework. With fewer diversions competing for their attention, students can fully concentrate on assignments and develop strong study skills.

3. Encouraging Academic Growth

In addition to establishing routines and expectations, parents can play an active, involved role in encouraging their children's academic growth through specific strategies like discussing schoolwork, guiding independent problem-solving, reading together, communicating with teachers, and modeling curiosity.

Parents can play an active, involved role in encouraging their children's continuous academic growth through a variety of effective strategies. Simply talking about school lessons and showing interest in what children are learning helps strengthen knowledge and motivation (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). Set aside time each day to discuss topics they covered in class, new concepts

they find interesting or confusing, questions they may have, and so on. Making these types of substantive conversations about academics a daily habit reinforces classroom learning and allows parents to provide clarification when needed. They can relate new material to things children already understand or past experiences to aid comprehension and retention. Descriptive praise of children's effort and incremental progress through these types of engaging discussions fosters self-efficacy and growth mindset.

When children need help on homework, parents should resist simply giving answers but instead offer guidance that develops problem-solving skills and independent thinking (Patall et al., 2008). Guiding questions can diagnose where students are stuck so parents can offer tailored assistance. Parents might talk children step-by-step through problems while allowing them to do the work themselves, highlight patterns from previous examples done correctly, suggest strategies like breaking problems into smaller parts, or create visual study aids together. This type of scaffolded support enables skill-building versus reliance on parents as substitutes for children's own efforts.

Literacy development can be nurtured through a regular routine of reading together. Parents might read more advanced books above children's independent level to model fluent reading and expose them to new vocabulary and ideas while stopping periodically to check comprehension (Evans et al., 2004). Reading a balanced diet of fiction and nonfiction fosters knowledge across disciplines. Parents can link book themes to real life examples and children's prior knowledge to aid connections. Letting children see parents as avid readers themselves motivates the habit of daily reading. Developing literacy skills early equips children for later academic success.

Two-way communication with teachers is another avenue for parents to stay informed about children's progress and find ways to provide supplemental academic support at home aligned with the classroom (Topor et al., 2010). Attending parent-teacher conferences and back-to-school nights, corresponding via email or phone calls about pressing questions, and maintaining an open and positive relationship all allow parents to reinforce lessons, identify potential issues early, and collaborate as partners in the child's education.

Parents also encourage an academic growth mindset by modeling curiosity, critical thinking skills, and discovery-based learning through everyday activities done together. Things like cooking, playing strategy games, conducting science experiments, visiting museums, or researching interesting questions that arise in conversation expose children to new concepts and ways of thinking (Hilado et al., 2011). When parents demonstrate a passion for learning and intellectual discovery, children internalize similar motivations and self-perceptions.

Though involvement evolves as children grow more independent, particularly through the teen years, parents remain indispensable supports, motivators, and partners in their children's continuous academic growth. Their active participation in discussing schoolwork, guiding homework habits, nurturing literacy, communicating with teachers, and role modeling engaged learning helps ensure children gain the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to fulfill their academic potential.

3.1 Discuss school lessons and what children are learning

Simply talking with children about what they are studying in school helps reinforce lessons and content knowledge (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). Set aside time to ask about their day - what topics they covered, what they learned and found interesting, if they have questions on anything. Go beyond just "How was school today?" to have more substantive discussions. Connect new material to things children already know or past experiences to aid comprehension and retention. Talk through challenging concepts until they click. Share your own curiosity and perspectives to model engaged learning (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). Descriptive praise of effort and progress makes children feel capable and motivated to take on new academic challenges.

3.2 Guide children through problems but avoid doing the work for them

When children need help on homework, parents should resist simply providing answers. Instead, offer guidance that develops problem-solving skills and independent thinking (Patall et al., 2008). Ask probing questions to diagnose where they are stuck. Talk them step-by-step through the problem while allowing them to do the work. Highlight patterns from previous examples they have solved correctly. Suggest strategies like breaking complex problems into smaller parts, estimating solutions first, or creating visual aids. Avoid excessive direct assistance that deprives

children of the chance to practice and gain mastery. Patience and gradual withdrawal of support builds confidence and capability.

3.3 Read together daily to support literacy development

Reading with children every day, starting from a very young age, provides innumerable academic benefits (Evans et al., 2004). It builds language skills, expands vocabulary and background knowledge, develops comprehension strategies, and cultivates a love of reading. Try to read books above children's independent reading level to model fluency and expose them to new words and ideas. Stop periodically to check understanding with informal questions. Link book topics to real life and prior knowledge. Maintain a balance of fiction and nonfiction reading. Let children see parents as avid readers themselves to motivate regular reading habits. Fostering literacy development from an early age equips children for later academic success.

3.4 Communicate with teachers about progress

Parents should maintain an open line of communication with teachers through both formal conferences and informal check-ins to stay up-to-date on their children's progress (Topor et al., 2010). Attend back-to-school nights to learn about the curriculum and expectations. Participate in parent-teacher conferences to touch base on strengths, areas for improvement, and strategies to support learning at home. Email or call teachers with any pressing questions or concerns that arise. Positive two-way communication enables parents to reinforce classroom lessons at home and alert teachers to potential issues early on. It shows children that parents and teachers are a unified team supporting their education.

3.5 Model curiosity and engage in learning activities together

Parents can model curiosity, passion for learning, and critical thinking skills by engaging children in educational activities at home (Hilado et al., 2011). Cook or bake together while teaching math and science concepts. Do puzzles and play board games that develop logic and reasoning. Visit museums, zoos, and historical sites to bring learning to life. Conduct science experiments together using household items. Research interesting questions that come up in everyday conversation. Learning together deepens family bonds while exposing children to new

ideas and ways of thinking (Wilder, 2014). Children emulate the attitudes to learning that parents model.

Parental effort to encourage continuous academic growth through discussion, guidance, literacy immersion, communication with school staff, and role modeling can significantly boost children's knowledge, capabilities, and future academic success. While involvement must adapt to respect a child's growing independence, particularly through the teen years, parents remain key supports and motivators of educational achievement at all ages.

4. Motivating Children's Achievement

Parents play a key role in motivating their children's academic achievement by conveying expectations for success, praising effort over inherent ability, and celebrating hard work and accomplishments. These strategies boost engagement, resilience, and aspirations.

4.1 Set expectations for achievement

When parents clearly communicate high yet realistic expectations for achievement paired with assurance in their children's potential, it motivates students to fulfill those aspirations (Fan & Chen, 2001). Set specific goals like aiming for a certain grade average or test score based on past performance. Frame struggles as temporary setbacks fully within children's power to improve with effort. Offer encouragement by expressing belief in children's abilities. Model determination in pursuing your own endeavors. Studies find parental expectations strongly predict academic performance as children internalize confidence in their capabilities (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010).

4.2 Praise effort and perseverance

Parents should emphasize effort, improvement, and perseverance over inherent intelligence when praising children's academic accomplishments. Comments like "You worked really hard to understand this," or "Your practice and preparation really show," convey that dedication pays off (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017). Children also benefit from hearing how they overcame setbacks

through persistence. This fosters a growth mindset of intelligence as mutable rather than fixed. Children who see ability as continually developing through effort are more motivated learners with greater resilience. Ensure praise communicates high standards versus low expectations.

4.3 Celebrate hard work and accomplishments

Recognizing children's hard work and academic milestones builds pride, self-efficacy, and inspiration to sustain progress (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Celebrate the completion of big projects, good quiz scores, passing major tests, or earning a spot on the honor roll. Find special ways to mark major accomplishments like framing an exemplary graded assignment. Emphasize that progress results from diligence over innate gifts. Share pride in children's dedication and growth versus just outcomes. Let children know parents appreciate how hard they work in school. Recognition reinforces intrinsic motivation.

4.4 Additional strategies to motivate achievement include:

- Display schoolwork prominently at home to showcase pride in learning.
- Help children outline longer-term academic goals driving day-to-day efforts.
- Share inspirational stories of those who overcame adversity through perseverance.
- Limit criticism and comparison with peers to avoid undermining confidence.
- Celebrate intellectual curiosity and discovery over rote learning.
- Connect school skills to careers and adulthood to highlight relevance.
- Encourage goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflective evaluation of progress.
- Convey unconditional encouragement not tied solely to outcomes.

While holding children accountable with high standards, parents must balance pressure with emotional support. Overemphasis on grades and rigid expectations can inadvertently demotivate students (Lv et al., 2019). Unconditional care paired with growth-focused guidance optimally motivates achievement.

5. Conclusion

This paper has synthesized decades of research underscoring the vital role of parents in supporting children's education. While schools provide formal instruction during weekdays,

parents have an unparalleled opportunity to enrich learning and development at home evenings, weekends, and through the summer. When teachers and parents work collaboratively as partners, children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Active parental involvement benefits children immeasurably from preschool through high school by enhancing skills, knowledge, motivation, and self-discipline needed for achievement. Students with engaged parents earn higher grades, score better on standardized tests, have elevated graduation rates, and complete more postsecondary education. Learning is maximized when school instruction is paired with reinforcement, discussion of lessons, literacy immersion, and other enriching learning experiences at home. Beyond just academics, involved parenting promotes mental health, identity development, prosocial behaviors, and self-esteem from an early age.

While critical at all ages, supportive involvement evolves developmentally as children mature. Parents shift from fostering basic literacy and social skills in early childhood to reinforcing specific skills and content knowledge in elementary school. By adolescence, teens need less direct oversight but benefit enormously from parents showing interest, guiding study habits, and fostering resilience and motivation. Supportive involvement adapts across ages but remains important throughout.

Educating children is a collective responsibility requiring reciprocal commitment from both families and schools. Teachers provide high-quality instruction grounded in curriculum standards during the school day. Parents reinforce this knowledge while imparting family values, nurturing talents and interests, and monitoring homework during evenings, weekends and breaks. Open communication and collaboration between parents and school staff creates continuity across contexts. While schools strive to serve all students, parents have a singular ability to provide individually tailored supplemental support responsive to their child's needs and learning styles. Their role is indispensable.

In conclusion, the extensive body of evidence confirms parental involvement significantly enhances nearly all aspects of children's academic achievement and educational experience

when actively practiced over time. The home environment and expectations parents establish, assistance they provide, discussions they engage in, and interest they demonstrate enriches the foundation of skills and knowledge built at school. As children's first and most influential teachers, parents have an unparalleled opportunity to nurture the joy of discovery, grit, and self-efficacy needed to fulfill potential. There are no substitutes for the unique parental support only families can provide. With dedication across their children's lives, parents ensure the most comprehensive, enriched education possible.

In overview, parents who express consistent expectations for success, praise hard work over fixed ability, and celebrate progress reinforce children's motivation, resilience, and aspirations needed to excel. This promotes the mindsets, behaviors, and skills that drive academic accomplishments.

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