

Parental Involvement and Children's Academic Success

Summary

Children with involved parents have higher academic achievement. Not only do students score higher on tests but they are more prepared to start school and have a greater likelihood of graduating.

- **School Readiness.** Preschoolers whose parents are very involved with their schools score higher than their peers in all aspects of school readiness. Compared with peers whose parents had low levels of school involvement, preschoolers whose parent were very involved with their schools had greater mastery of early basic school skills, with regard to academic, social, and behavioral aspects.¹
- **Behavior Problems.** Children who have a positive relationship with their mothers when they are in kindergarten are less likely to have behavior problems and more likely to excel in later years. A positive relationship between mother and child at the time of kindergarten was related to less likelihood of behavior problems and greater academic achievement in middle school, even when controlling for demographic variables.²
- **Academic Achievement.** Children whose fathers are involved in their education have greater academic achievement. Father's involvement in their children's education was associated with greater academic achievement for children, even when controlling for mothers' involvement.³
- **Math and Science Achievement.** Children of parents who promote math and science are more likely to study those subjects later on. Children whose parents' positive attitudes toward math and science were reflected in the toys they purchased and activities they engaged in with them were more likely to subsequently be involved in those arenas.⁴
- **High School Graduation.** Youths whose parents are highly involved in their education during elementary school are more likely to graduate from high school, complete high-school requirements, or complete a higher grade in high school. Students whose teachers reported higher levels of parental involvement were more likely to graduate high-school, to complete high-school (via graduation or GED) than peers whose parents were not so involved, and they were more likely to have completed a higher grade in high school. The more years a parent was involved, the greater was this association with grade completion.⁵
- **Academic Enrollment.** High school students whose parents are highly involved and have high expectations for them are more likely to enroll in an academic program and complete core courses. Compared with peers of similar socio-economic backgrounds, those whose parents were more highly involved and had high educational expectations were more likely to enroll in an academic program and more likely to complete credits in mathematics, science, and English.⁶

- **Academic Achievement for Low-Income Students.** Low-income children whose parents are involved with their school activities tend to exhibit higher levels of academic achievement. According to both teachers' and parents' reports, parental involvement in school activities was associated with greater academic achievement from kindergarten through mid-adolescence.⁷
- **Academic Achievement for Minority Students.** Minority students whose parents are highly involved with their education tend to do better in school than peers of less involved parents. Among African-American, Latino, and Asian-American students, greater parental involvement was associated with higher levels of academic achievement including, grades, standardized test scores, teachers' reports, and academic behavior.⁸
- **Academic Achievement for African-American Males.** African-American males with involved parents are more likely to succeed in school than peers of less involved parents. African-American males whose parents had an authoritarian parenting style, incorporated messages of cultural heritage, and were involved in their schoolwork were more likely to succeed in school than peers who experienced different parenting practices.⁹
- **Academic Achievement among Mexican-American Students.** Mexican-American students tend to have higher grades if their parents more closely monitor their extracurricular activities and their families are involved with their school. For first-, second-, and third-generation high-school students of Mexican descent (based

on their parents' and their own place of birth), those whose parents more closely monitored their extracurricular activities and whose families were more involved with their schools tended to have higher grades.¹⁰

Endnotes

- 1 Rebecca A. Marcon, "Positive Relationships Between Parent School Involvement and Public School Inner-City Preschoolers' Development and Academic Performance," *School Psychology Review* 28, No. 3 (1999): 395-412.
- 2 Emily Fergus Morrison, Sara Rimm-Kauffman, and Robert C. Pianta, "A Longitudinal Study of Mother-Child Interactions at School Entry and Social and Academic Outcomes in Middle School," *Journal of School Psychology* 41, No. 3 (May/June 2003): 185-200.
- 3 Brent A. McBride, Sarah J. Schoppe-Sullivan, and Moon-Ho Ho, "The Mediating Role of Fathers' School Involvement on Student Achievement," *Applied Developmental Psychology* 26, No. 2 (2005): 201-216.
- 4 Janis E. Jacobs and Martha M. Bleeker, "Girls' and Boys' Developing Interests in Math and Science: Do Parents Matter?" *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, No. 106 (Winter 2004): 5-21.
- 5 Wendy Miedel Barnard, "Parent Involvement in Elementary School and Educational Attainment," *Children and Youth Services Review* 26, No. 1 (January 2004): 39-62.
- 6 Sophia Catsambis, "Expanding Knowledge of Parental Involvement in Children's Secondary Education: Connections with High School Seniors' Academic Success," *Social Psychology of Education* 5 (2001): 149-177.
- 7 Elizabeth Graue, Melissa A. Clements, Arthur J. Reynolds, and Michael D. Niles, "More than Teacher Directed or Child Initiated: Preschool Curriculum Type, Parent Involvement, and Children's Outcomes in the Child-Parent Centers," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 12, No. 72 (December 2004): 1-38.
- 8 William H. Jeynes, "A Meta-Analysis: The Effects of Parental Involvement on Minority Children's Academic Achievement," *Education and Urban Society* 35, No. 2 (February 2003): 202-218.
- 9 Jelani Mandara, "The Impact of Family Functioning on African American Males' Academic Achievement: A Review and Clarification of the Empirical Literature," *Teachers College Record* 108, No. 2 (February 2006): 106-223.
- 10 James L. Rodriguez, "Family Environment and Achievement Among Three Generations of Mexican American High School Students," *Applied Developmental Science* 6, No. 2 (2002): 88-94.

