

Making Parental Involvement work for the working parent.

Many parents work outside the home and find it difficult to spend time at the school during the day. However, you don't have to take off to take your parental involvement to the next level. It's important and easy to be a part of your child's education; awareness of your child's academic career does not take that much time and the benefits are invaluable. Even the busiest parents can:

- Help their children succeed by talking candidly and constructively with their teachers about how your children's scores fit into or are affected by the school's performance overall.
- Ask their school's principal or teachers how they and other parents can help the school work towards improving academic performance.
- Ask their children's teachers to provide them with things they can do at home with their child that focus on academic objectives.

You Make the Difference.

Parents can play a big role in helping reach the goal of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which is to close or dramatically narrow the differences in academic achievement among students without regard to race, ethnicity, immigrant status or wealth. All states are required to set challenging standards for what children should know and be able to do in reading, math and science at various grade levels. NCLB requires every state to bring 100 percent of students to state standards by the year 2014. An increase in Parental Involvement at every grade level can help Arkansas meet that requirement.

** From a study of standards-based reform practices done by Westat and Policy Studies Associates (2001) for the U.S. Department of Education as reported in "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement."*

A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Excel



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What is Parental Involvement?

Families have a huge influence on children's achievement in school and throughout life. Research has proven that when families work together to support learning, children perform better in school, stay in school longer, and enjoy their education.

Parental Involvement is truly the great equalizer: Studies have found that students with involved parents, regardless of income or background, were more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs.
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits.
- Attend school regularly.
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.



What can I do?

Being involved with your child's education is no longer just about attending PTA meetings, chili suppers, or even parent-teacher conferences. It does not mean being connected once or twice during the school year. Being involved means being connected on a daily basis with your child's education. Show your child that school is so important that even you feel the need to be there. It means being a mentor as well as a parent.

Teachers and school administrators want parents to be involved at home and at school with their children.

Activities for parents should include:

- Engaging in learning activities at home, such as helping with reading skills and checking homework.
- Knowing and monitoring what your child is and should be learning.
- Supervising children and monitoring how they spend their time out of school.
- Talking about school and what children are learning.
- Attending school events, going to parent-teacher conferences, meeting with teachers, and volunteering in the classroom or school.

However, it takes more than engaged parents to produce high student achievement. There has to be high expectations of students by both parents and teachers. When students are challenged to do more, they achieve more. Studies that compared levels of involvement found that achievement increased directly with the extent to which parents were engaged with the learning process. And in schools where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, test scores grew at a rate of 40 percent higher than in schools where teachers reported low levels of outreach.*

Parents can definitely be a part of the solution for higher achievement. Ask yourself:

- When was the last time I gave time to my child's school?
- Do I understand my child's required state testing?
- How can I help improve my child's test scores?
- Does my child's teacher see me as an educational partner?

By forming a partnership with teachers, parents can make a huge difference in their student's performance from kindergarten through 12th grade. Parents should know the expectations of the school and insist that they be high. Benefits of Parental Involvement in the classroom include:

- First-hand understanding of expectations in the classroom.
- Knowledge of curriculum policies, programs, and opportunities.
- Increased sense of comfort and ownership at school.
- Observation of your child to better understand her strengths/weaknesses.
- Chance to know your child's friends.
- Opportunity for input into the program.

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