

## **Parent Support and Involvement**

Parents, who help their young child learn to read, attend classes or activities and guide the child through their first school project may begin to withdraw from involvement at high school level as their child gets older and becomes more independent. However there are many ways that parents can continue to be involved with their child's education and in high school while encouraging a child's emerging independence. Parental involvement in education and school life nurtures a child's well-being and academic success.

Research conducted by Robert Weiss demonstrated that there are substantial benefits when children can rely on parents to be available; provide love, care, warmth, emotional and practical support; believe in their abilities and personal worth (this characteristic was strongly correlated with success); share interests and concerns; give guidance and advice. Carolyn Cutrona and her colleagues identified that a student's perception of parental support was a powerful predictor of higher academic grades.

In addition to providing support at home, parents' involvement with the school has been identified as a critical factor in their children's academic achievement. Over eighty major research projects have examined the role of parental involvement in schools and provide evidence that parental participation has a significant and positive impact upon students' academic performance. Investigating the decline in parental involvement as students move through school, David Baker and David Stevenson's research suggests that students see their parents' lack of involvement as an indication that school is not important and this places their academic success at risk.

Parental involvement in schools can take many forms, including attending students' activities, parent information talks, parent-teacher meetings, fundraising, joining committees and volunteering. Despite parents being strongly involved in the school, Nicholas Colangelo's research identified that students did not see their parents as over-involved. He noted that fathers of students who were achieving in the lower quartile were less involved in school.

Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp reviewed years of research on parent involvement in "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement," (2002), and concluded: "When parents are involved in school, students of all backgrounds and income levels do better. When their parents are involved, kids are more likely to earn higher grades and score better on standardized tests; they attend school more regularly, have improved social skills, and are better behaved in school; and they are more likely to continue their education past high school."

Parents may have many demanding work and family commitments; however there is a wealth of research evidence to support what we may have known all along: parents can have an enormous impact on academic achievement and emotional wellbeing by supporting their child at home and being involved within the school.