



Fact Sheet #9

Getting Involved in Your Child's Education

Whether your child is new to school this year or getting ready to graduate, participating in their education is one of the most important things you can do to ensure their academic success. This fact sheet will define Parent Involvement, tell you what the research says, and give you some tips that can help you work more effectively with your child's school.

What is Parent Involvement?

The Federal Department of Education says that Parent Involvement in education is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. Schools with a strong commitment to involving families ensure that:

- ◆ parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- ◆ parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
- ◆ parents are full partners in their child's education and are included in decision making
- ◆ parents are represented on school advisory committees

Why is Parent Involvement Important?

Research has shown that parent involvement in education is a more important predictor of student success than family income level or the how much education the parents completed. In fact, kids are most likely to succeed when their families:

- ✦ create a home environment that encourages learning
- ✦ communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for the child's achievement and future career
- ✦ become involved in the child's education at school and in the community

When parents are involved, children are more likely to:

- ◆ get better grades and test scores
- ◆ graduate from high school at higher rates
- ◆ go on to higher education
- ◆ be better behaved and have more positive attitudes

Family involvement in education impacts more than grades. Research has shown that:

- ✦ alcohol use, violence and antisocial behaviors tend to decrease as parent involvement increases
- ✦ educators tend to hold higher expectations of students whose parents talk regularly with teachers
- ✦ when parents are involved, students usually have better attitudes, are more motivated toward school, and have better self-esteem



How Can I Get Involved?

Here are some simple, research-based activities to develop strong family involvement:

Communicate

- ✦ find out the best way to contact your child's teacher(s)
- ✦ tell your child's teacher(s) the best way for them to contact you
- ✦ let your child's teacher know right away when you have questions or concerns
- ✦ send notes, emails, or call the school
- ✦ attend open house and parent-teacher conferences
- ✦ ask for an interpreter and translated materials if you need them

Ask Questions

- ✦ talk to other parents in your neighborhood
- ✦ prepare for meetings with teachers by bringing a list of questions
- ✦ ask about your child's achievement
- ✦ find out about extra support that might be available
- ✦ ask your child about his/her day
- ✦ enjoy a family meal at least three times a week

Show your child education is important

- ✦ know what your child is learning at school
- ✦ make homework a priority, and provide a comfortable space for your student
- ✦ limit television viewing during the week to 1 hour a day or less
- ✦ volunteer for after-school activities
- ✦ attend school events
- ✦ offer to serve on school advisory boards
- ✦ help your high school student with course selection
- ✦ talk about your student's future

Learn More

- ✦ attend parent workshops and informational meetings
- ✦ attend School Board meetings (some communities air them on cable TV)
- ✦ volunteer at the school regularly, or for special events
- ✦ join parent groups at the school like the PTA
- ✦ call Maine's Parent Information and Resource Center (Maine State PIRC)

Maine PIRC is a nonprofit project of Maine Parent Federation. We provide free help to parents who want to learn more about the school system and how to be involved in their child's education.

Information based on the research of Joyce Epstein, et al.

For more information on this and other educational topics, contact Maine State PIRC.



Maine State PIRC
(Parent Information and Resource Center)
A Project of Maine Parent Federation
PO Box 2067, Augusta, ME 04338 * 1-800-870-7746 * 207-623-2144
Website: www.mpf.org * Email: parentconnect@mpf.org

Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Rev. 10/07