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EFFECT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

One of the most important areas of research in education is the role of parents in student achievement. Studies indicate that parents working as volunteers, homework helpers, and participants in school activities influence student success, but we do not know exactly how that happens or how teachers perceive of their relationships with parents. Although researchers state that the parent teacher relationship is important, they have not systematically unpacked how parent involvement is related to the instructional decision making of teachers. New emphasis is being placed on the importance of parent involvement in children's education. In a synthesis of research on the effects of parent involvement in homework, a analysis of many studies that manipulated parent training for homework involvement reveals that training parents to be involved in their child's homework results in (a) higher rates of homework completion, (b) fewer homework problems, and (c) possibly, improved academic performance among elementary school children. The results suggest that different types of parent involvement in homework have different relationships to achievement and that the type of parent involvement changes as children move through the school grades.

Key words: Parental Involvement, Student Achievement, School Governance, Parental Attitudes & Aspirations.

INTRODUCTION

It is no wonder that parent involvement with the schools has become a major educational issue in the 1980s. This is an era of increasing concern about the quality of education in this country. States are taking a greater role in monitoring and maintaining academic standards. Communities are ever more watchful of the expense of public education. Local schools are concerned about continuing to provide high-quality teaching and other services with dwindling resources. And parents want assurance that their children will receive adequate preparation to lead rewarding adult lives. Is parent involvement a valuable, if largely untapped, resource for schools struggling to provide state of the art instruction with diminishing funds—a way to instill pride and interest in schooling, increase student achievement, and enhance a sense of community and commitment? Or is it one more responsibility to add to overburdened teachers and administrators or even a threat to the autonomy and professionalism of the schools? Most children have two main educators in their lives — their parents and their teachers. Parents are the prime educators until the child attends an early years setting or starts school and they remain a major influence on their children's learning throughout school and beyond. The school and parents both have crucial roles to play. There is no universal agreement on what parental involvement is, it can take many forms, from involvement at the school (as a governor, helping in the classroom or during lunch breaks) through to reading to the child at home, teaching songs or nursery rhymes and assisting with homework. This can be categorised into two broad strands:

- 1) Parents' involvement in the life of the school
- 2) Their involvement in support of the individual child at home.

This document is focused on the second of these, as there is consistent evidence of the educational benefits of involving parents in their child's learning at home.⁶ Because of the complex interaction between a number of factors (and only some of which have been taken into account in the analysis) it is difficult to prove that one causes the other, the research instead demonstrates that a relationship exists between parental involvement and achievement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are literally hundreds of books, journal articles, and stand-alone reports on the subject of parents' involvement in their children's education. These writings include research reports, expert opinions, theory papers, program descriptions, and guidelines for setting up programs. A great many of these reports are informative and useful, and, because parent involvement has become a "hot topic" in the past few years, there is considerable current information.

Walberg, H. J.; Bole, R. E. and Waxman, H. C. (1980) Investigates the effects on student achievement of parent support of learning activities. Parents of students in grades 1-6 in 41 classes in Chicago agreed to

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