

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement

A research synthesis authored by *Anne T. Henderson & Karen L. Mapp*, published by SEDL.

Key Findings about Impact:

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: many forms of family and community involvement influence student achievement at all ages.

- ❖ Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to improved student achievement.
Epstein, Simon & Salinas (1997), Jordan, Snow & Porche (2000), Starkey & Klein (2000)
- ❖ The more families support their children's learning and educational progress, both in quantity and over time, the more their children tend to do well in school and continue their education.
Miedel & Reynolds (1999), Sanders & Herting (2000), Marcon (1999)
- ❖ Families of all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels can, and often do, have a positive influence on their children's learning.
Ho Sui-Chu & Willms (1996), Shaver & Walls (1998), Clark (1993)
- ❖ Family and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement.
Invernizzi, Rosemary, Richards & Richards (1997), Dryfoos (2000), Clark (2002)

Key Findings about Making Connections:

When programs and initiatives focus on building respectful and trusting relationships among school staff, families, and community members, they are more effective in creating and sustaining connections that support student achievement.

- ❖ Programs that successfully connect with families and community invite involvement, are welcoming, and address specific parental and community needs.
Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997), Sanders & Harvey (2000), Peña (2000)
- ❖ Parent involvement programs that are effective in engaging diverse families recognize cultural and class differences, address needs and build on strengths.
Scribner, Young & Pedroza (1999), Chrispeels & Rivero (2000), López (2001)
- ❖ Effective connections embrace a philosophy of partnership where power is shared—the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members.
Wang, Oates & Weishew (1997), Smrekar et al (2001), Moore (1998)
- ❖ Organized initiatives to build parent and community leadership aimed at improving low-performing schools are growing and leading to promising results in low-income urban areas and the rural South.
Mediratta, Fruchter & Lewis (2002), Jacobs & Hirota (2002), Wilson & Corbett (2000)

A New Wave of Evidence is available at as full-text PDF at www.sedl.org/connections/resources. Below are references for the studies cited. A summary of each study can be found in the full report.

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