

Parental engagement research abstracts



Family-School
& Community
Partnerships
Bureau



Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau. 2011.

Parental engagement research abstracts

Prepared for the Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau by Karen Jennings 2011

ISBN: 978-0-9872370-2-6

The Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau is assisted by funding from the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations - Quality Outcomes Programme. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

This work is copyright under the *Copyright Act 1968* and *Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000* and equivalent legislation in overseas territories. You may download, store in cache, display, print and copy a single copy or part of a single copy of information or material from this document only for your personal, non-commercial use and only in an unaltered form. This paper may be used for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* and the *Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000*.

You are not permitted to re-transmit, distribute or commercialise the information or material without seeking prior written approval from the Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau. Any permitted reproduction made must acknowledge the source of any selected passage, extract, diagram or other information or material reproduced. Any reproduction made of the information or material must include a copy of the original copyright and disclaimer notices as set out here.

PO BOX 3910 WESTON CREEK ACT AUSTRALIA 2611



From Moral Supporters to Struggling Advocates. Reconceptualizing Parent Roles in Education Through the Experience of Working-Class Families of Color (Auerbach, 2007, USA).

This qualitative case study examined the beliefs, goals, and practices of 16 working-class African American and Latino parents whose children were in a college access program at a racially and socioeconomically mixed high school in Los Angeles. While it may seem quite culturally specific, it raises questions quite relevant to the Australian context. It explores how marginalised parents construct their role in promoting their children's access to educational opportunity, and what lessons their experience may have for our understanding of parent involvement. Auerbach goes beyond the parameters of traditional models to offer an alternative typology of parent roles, which reflects parents' contrasting social and cultural locations, biographies, perceptions and relations with their children and the school.

Auerbach sees traditional typologies of parent involvement (such as Joyce Epstein's) as placing undue emphasis on school-based involvement, the priorities of educators, and cooperation that assumes shared goals and a level playing field for all. She argues that such models fail to acknowledge the unequal distribution of economic, human, cultural, and social capital. These inequities, together with schools' devaluing of the resources of lower socioeconomic status families, constrains parents' involvement options and relations with schools. In addition, she argues that marginalised parents are more likely than those of the dominant culture to have a sceptical, ambivalent, and potentially adversarial stance toward school programs that have historically failed their communities.

Auerbach notes that teachers have tended to value parent involvement in terms of certain legitimate acts of school-based involvement like helping with homework and going on field trips, and because marginalised parents are less likely to come to the school than middle class White parents, this may be misinterpreted as a sign that they don't care about their children's schooling. Strategies such as making sacrifices so children can attend better schools, or limiting children's chores to allow for study time, may not be visible. These differences in parent involvement can mean that higher SES children have opportunities for more 'customised' education while lower SES students are offered more 'generic' opportunities.

Auerbach's typology of parent roles does not presume to be comprehensive, but rather aims to suggest an alternative framework for understanding roles beyond mainstream models of involvement. She recognises three broad types of parents:

1. *Moral Supporters*. These parents offered moral and emotional support for college largely in the form of talking with their children, as in stressing the value of education, study, and hard work. They provided this support at home and rarely went to the school. Metaphorically, *Moral Supporters* took a hands-off stance, pointing the way toward a successful future and clearing the pathway of road blocks when they could.
2. *Struggling Advocates* were at the opposite end of the continuum, providing more direct, tangible support and monitoring at home, along with advocacy at school. These parents intervened with the school and initiated a greater number and variety of support strategies, such as talking to school counsellors and monitoring homework. Metaphorically, *Struggling*



Advocates took a hands-on stance, pushing for progress as part of strong social mobility aspirations for both their children and themselves. They did not trust their children to succeed on their own, nor did they trust the school to guide them. Rather, they believed that parent action was necessary to give students the extra push they needed to get ahead. These parents persisted in their efforts despite limited knowledge, frustration with being rebuffed by the school bureaucracy, and resistance from their children.

3. *Ambivalent Companions* supported their children's education through strong emotional support, close communication, and occasional tangible help, such as assisting students with school projects. Although their support was mainly indirect and home-based, like that of the Moral Supporters, *Ambivalent Companions* were more aware of their children's school lives and more assimilated to the dominant culture. Metaphorically, these parents (all single mothers of daughters) took an occasional hands-off stance, accompanying their children's educational journey and applauding their progress from the sidelines but also anticipating roadblocks. In their reluctance to deal with school staff, these parents expressed the ambivalence of their student days and their wariness of mainstream institutions. They wanted better opportunities for their daughters but were ambivalent about college as a threat to family ties and obligations, thus conveying mixed messages. In their acts of communication, *Ambivalent Companions* were mainly concerned with bolstering their daughters' self-esteem and steering them in the right direction, away from the parents' mistakes and struggles.

Auerbach maintains that parents' own educational histories powerfully shape their aspirations and beliefs about their role. Parent roles also were co-constructed with the school, with parents responding to a sense of rebuff or support from staff. Many reported experiencing bureaucratic indifference and alienation at some point in their students' careers. Although this led to disengagement from the high school for the *Moral Supporters* and *Struggling Companions*, the *Advocates Companions* persisted in their efforts to gain help or information.

So what are the practical implications?

Auerbach concludes that just as schools need to affirm and accommodate marginalised students, so too, do schools need to transform their understandings of, and interactions with, working-class or marginalised parents, going beyond stereotypical 'deficit' thinking about such families.

She makes a powerful case for broadening the traditional, middle-class definition of what counts as parent involvement to include more open-ended notions of parent support for children's education, advancement, and wellbeing.

Educators need to understand that such support takes multiple forms, some invisible to the school, and that it is shaped by a web of cultural and psychosocial factors in home, school, and community contexts. Educators also need to engage the broad school community in reducing sources of conflict in home-school relations, starting with removing barriers to access and communication and responding flexibly to advocacy efforts by/for marginalised families.



Finally, schools, parent programs, university access programs, and government initiatives should capitalise on parents' intense concern and need for information to engage more marginalised families in their children's education. Information needs to be available in multiple languages and formats and through small-scale culturally relevant parent outreach programs.

"...The better educators understand how families support education, the better schools can promote partnerships with informed parent participation and respectful, culturally sensitive, home-school relations. Such collaboration, in turn, will contribute to more equitable outcomes and more manageable 'border crossings' between home and school..." (p.279).

Auerbach, S. (2007). From moral supporters to struggling advocates: Reconceptualizing parent roles in education through the experience of working-class families of color. *Urban Education*, 42 (3), 250-283.

Available at URL address: <http://uex.sagepub.com/content/42/3/250>

(Note: If you register for a free online trial of Sage Education publications you can access this and other articles for a month. See the Register box on this link at the top of the page).



Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008, AUS).

The nature of parental involvement in children's education in the early years of school is investigated in this paper, as well as the relationship between parental involvement and children's learning competence. The paper briefly reviews research findings on parental involvement and then analyses data from *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)*, using data on children in Years 1 and 2.

The paper addresses questions such as:

- *What expectations do parents have for their child's education?*
- *How responsive do parents believe schools and teachers are to their needs?*
- *What contact do parents have with their children's school/ teachers in the early years of school?*
- *Does parental involvement predict children's learning competence?*

Berthelsen and Walker note the research evidence indicating that when schools and families work together, children have higher achievement in school and stay in school longer. However, they also comment that while extensive research indicates there are important links between parenting and children's academic and behavioural competence at school, there is less research on 'academic socialisation', which they conceptualise as the variety of parental beliefs and behaviours that influence children's school-related development.

Berthelsen and Walker believe there is a need for increased understanding about how, and why, parents understand their involvement in different ways. Some parents may be involved because they believe they bear the primary responsibility for their children's educational achievement. Others may have a notion of partnership and shared responsibility with schools. Still others may not believe they should take an active role, or may lack the confidence to be involved. The authors note that 'for these latter parents, developing personal self-efficacy beliefs that one can be effective in supporting children's learning at home and at school requires encouragement by teachers and schools, as well as opportunities to participate' (p.35).

Findings from their own research on Australian kindergarten age children included the following:

- In the Australian data there were relatively high levels of parental engagement, according to both parental self reports and teacher reports. Teachers indicated that almost two-thirds of the parents were very involved in their children's education.
- Most parents had high expectations including, for example, that their child would complete school and go on to post-secondary study, either to complete a university degree or a vocational course.



- Parents reported that schools were relatively responsive to family needs and supportive of family involvement. They felt that schools had actively helped them to be aware of opportunities to be involved in their child's schooling.
- The level of engagement in particular school-related activities, as reported by parents, indicated that parents most frequently talked with other parents at the school or visited the child's classroom.
- Teachers reported that direct contact with the parents through some form of communication (face-to-face or written) was the most frequent way in which parents were involved. Higher levels of parental involvement were evident for families with a higher household income.

Some relevant findings from the literature review were that:

- While parental involvement can be *correlated* with child outcomes in language and literacy, mathematical thinking, and approaches to learning, a *causal* link should not be inferred. It may also be that parental involvement is an *effect* of children's competence, as much as a cause.
- Parental involvement is not always positively associated with children's learning. Increased parental involvement may also occur in response to learning difficulties.
- Practices in school that provide support and resources for parent involvement in their children's schooling yield greater and longer-lasting benefits than many efforts that consume a large share of public educational spending, such as smaller class sizes and after-school programs.
- Offering involvement activities without forming strong family-school partnerships is unlikely to yield increased parental participation, especially for those families that are most alienated by traditional schooling practices.
- While the frequency of family-school contact can foster relationships, the quality of contacts makes the largest difference. Engaging parents in strong partnerships requires schools to solicit and respond to parents' suggestions and concerns. Schools must ask what they can do to make parents feel more confident and comfortable with involvement and to provide the activities and resources that parents need to feel empowered.

Berthelsen, D. & Walker, S. (2008). Parents' involvement in their children's education, Family Matters, 79, Australian Institute of Family Studies).

Available at URL address: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2008/fm79/bw.pdf>



Successful Home-School Partnerships (Bull, Brooking & Campbell, 2008, NZ).

This New Zealand report describes the findings of a research project designed to improve understanding of the key elements of successful home–school partnerships and how they operate in different school settings. The project included a review of evidence from seven international case studies and four recent evaluations of New Zealand initiatives, as well as an empirical research component comprising seven case studies from a range of different types of primary and secondary schools, including a special school and a Māori language immersion school.

The authors report that the research literature is unequivocal in showing that parental involvement makes a significant difference to educational achievement. Their literature review on parental involvement identifies a perceived need and increased demand for it, high levels of creativity and commitment by providers, a range of approaches to it, and appreciation by families.

The authors also argue, however, that there is presently little evidence about exactly what sort of involvement makes a difference to student achievement, and little robust data linking home–school partnerships to improved outcomes for students. The authors emphasise that this should not be taken to mean there are no links; rather, that there is a real need for more longitudinal studies specifically designed to look for the impact of such initiatives.

Bull, Brooking and Campbell nonetheless conclude that both the research literature and their own case studies suggest that successful home–school partnerships have certain key features:

Features of successful home-school partnerships

- Relationships in successful home–school partnerships are collaborative and mutually respectful.
- Successful partnerships are multi-dimensional and responsive to community needs.
- Successful home–school partnerships are planned for; embedded within whole school development plans; well resourced; and regularly reviewed.
- Successful partnerships are goal oriented and focused on learning.
- Effective parental engagement happens largely at home.
- There is timely two-way communication between school and parents in successful partnerships.
- Building successful home–school partnerships takes time and commitment.



In nearly all the case studies, teachers, parents, and some children thought the principal was a key player in establishing successful partnerships. Teachers' attitudes also seemed to be critical. The manner in which power is shared was seen as an important influence on how partnerships develop.

Purposes of initiatives

In the schools Bull, Brooking and Campbell surveyed, partnership initiatives had a range of different purposes. Sometimes the purpose was simply giving information to parents, sometimes it was about aligning home–school practices, and sometimes it was about the school and home working together to create something that neither partner could have produced on their own. Regardless of the purpose of the initiative, the development of positive relationships was seen as an essential first step in developing successful home–school partnerships.



Different contexts

Home–school partnerships were perceived to be easier to establish in small schools, and in closely knit communities, and to be more difficult with secondary age students.

It was observed that outreach workers can play an important role in establishing home–school partnerships in communities where the language and culture of the home is different from those of the teachers. In the special school and the *kura kaupapa Māori* (Māori language school), the partnerships were seen to be qualitatively different from those in mainstream settings.

Communication and the role of technology

Several case study schools were exploring ways of modifying current school practices such as parent–teacher interviews and homework to facilitate more genuine two-way communication between school and home. Technologies such as mobile phones, the internet and DVDs were being used creatively in some schools to strengthen links between school and home.

The report concludes that we really know little about the effectiveness of home–school partnerships as strategies for reducing disparity and/or developing successful 21st century learners.

Specifically, it suggests there is a need to find out more about exactly what sort of home–school partnerships are beneficial, how they are beneficial, and to whom.

Bull, A., Brooking, K. & Campbell, R. (2008). Successful Home-School Partnerships. Report prepared for Ministry of Education by New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Available at URL address: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/28415/3>



Why Fathers Matter to their Children's Literacy (Clark, 2009, UK).

Published by the National Literacy Trust in Britain, this paper notes that while research has established a clear link between parental involvement and children's educational attainment, much of it has focused on mother-child interactions. However, ideas of fatherhood and traditional gender roles are changing and there are now high social expectations for fathers to spend time with their children, with workplace provisions such as paternity leave and flexitime supporting this.

As the literature on father involvement and children's literacy outcomes is limited, Clark broadened her focus to encompass evidence regarding father involvement and general child outcomes. Her overview addresses the following questions:

1. What is the level of fathers' involvement in their children's literacy practices and how are fathers involved? Are mothers and fathers differently involved? Do specific types of involvement at one stage of development result in particular outcomes later in childhood or adolescence?
2. What is known about the influence of father involvement on children's literacy practices? What is the influence of father involvement on child outcomes over and above that of mothers? And is father involvement equally beneficial to boys and girls?

Clark cautions, however, that children's well being is shaped by multiple factors including family structure, access to resources and a range of other cultural and economic conditions, and that patterns of father involvement can only be one factor in a large and diverse array of possible contributors to developmental outcomes.

Clark's review found that fathers are involved in their children's literacy to a lesser degree than mothers, and that the father's level of engagement and the influence of that engagement will differ at different points in the child's development. There is evidence that fathers interact with their children in a different way than mothers do, in that fathers engage in more playful social interactions than in practical caretaking tasks. However, the research evidence in this area is sketchy and inconsistent. Research findings on whether fathers interact more, or differently, with their sons compared with their daughters, are also inconclusive.

Importantly, there is evidence that early father involvement with a child was associated with continued involvement throughout childhood and adolescence, indicating that engaging fathers in their children's lives from an early age may strongly increase the likelihood that they remain involved throughout their children's childhood.

One important finding Clark references (Fagan & Iglesias, 1999) is that actual changes in the *quality* of paternal behaviour are necessary for significant outcomes to come about, suggesting that an emphasis on increased *quantity* of father involvement alone may not be sufficient to bring about change or beneficial impacts.



Clark concludes that fathers have an important role to play in their children's literacy development, and that involving fathers in their children's literacy activities not only benefits their children. There are also numerous benefits that have been reported for the fathers themselves, including greater skill acquisition, greater confidence and self-esteem, a better father-child relationship, and increased engagement with learning.

Clark, C. (2009). Why Fathers Matter to their Children's Literacy. National Literacy Trust.

Available at URL address: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0770/Father_review_2009.pdf



The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review (Desforges with Abouchaar, 2003, UK).

Aimed at identifying reliable research evidence on the relationship between parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment in schools, this comprehensive review of English language research conducted in Britain, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Canada found two distinct bodies of literature.

The first focuses on describing and understanding the nature, extent, determinants and impact of spontaneously occurring parental involvement on children's educational outcomes. The authors comment that recent research in this area is of a very high quality.

The second focuses on describing and evaluating attempts to intervene to enhance spontaneous levels of involvement.

Key findings

- Parental involvement takes many forms including:
 - good parenting in the home (the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship)
 - contact with schools to share information
 - participation in school events
 - participation in the work of the school, and
 - participation in school governance.
- Most importantly, parental involvement in the form of 'at-home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment, even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range, the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement is much bigger than differences associated with variations in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups.
- Other forms of parental involvement do not appear to contribute to the scale of the impact of 'at-home' parenting.
- The extent and form of parental involvement is strongly influenced by family social class, maternal level of education, material deprivation, maternal psycho-social health and single parent status; also, to a lesser degree, by family ethnicity.
- Differences between parents in their level of involvement are associated with social class, poverty, health, and also with parental perception of their role and their levels of



confidence in fulfilling it. Some parents are put off by feeling put down by schools and teachers.

- The extent of parental involvement diminishes as the child gets older and is strongly influenced at all ages by the child characteristically taking a very active mediating role.
- Parental involvement is strongly influenced by the child's level of attainment: the higher the level of attainment, the more parents get involved.
- Research provides a clear model of how parental involvement works. In essence, parenting has its influence indirectly through shaping the child's self concept as a learner and through setting high aspirations.
- The research on interventions to promote parental involvement reveals a large number of approaches ranging from parent training programs, through to initiatives to enhance home school links and on to programs of family and community education.

High levels of creativity and commitment were evidenced on the part of providers, high levels of appreciation on the part of participants, and a perceived need and demand for such support.

In this context, the authors note that the evaluations of interventions are often too technically weak to describe the scale of the impact on students' achievement - but that this is not to say particular approaches or activities don't work.

The review concludes by noting (as at 2003) that:

- We have a good enough knowledge base to understand how spontaneous parental involvement works in promoting achievement.
- Current interventions, whilst promising, have yet to convincingly deliver the achievement bonus that might be expected.
- The achievement of working class pupils could be significantly enhanced if we systematically applied all that is known about parental involvement.

Desforges, C. with Abouchaar, A. (2003). The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievements and adjustment: A literature review. London, Dept. for Education and Skills.

Available at URL Address:

http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/files_uploaded/uploaded_resources/18617/Desforges.pdf



Literature Review: Parent Involvement (Edstar Inc., 2007, USA).

This literature review, produced by the American group Edstar, asks us to question some of the conventional wisdom about parental involvement and children's academic achievement. Because such a correlation seems intuitively incontrovertible (and also reassuring), some naive conclusions have been drawn. This is especially so because there are a myriad of definitions of both 'parental involvement' and 'academic achievement' in the research on parental involvement, and because so few of the studies are empirically based.

The authors observe that recent research shows parental involvement comes in many forms. Some positively affect student academic outcomes; others have little or no effect, and some are potentially or actually detrimental (e.g. parental involvement that includes badgering children to do their homework is not conducive to academic success).

The review focuses on significant *meta-analyses* (a research technique which amalgamates, summarises, and reviews previous quantitative research). Citing those previously undertaken by Jeynes (2005) and Fan and Chen (2001), the authors point out that 'parental aspirations' are the best predictor of student achievement in so far as when parents had high expectations of their children's performance, the children performed best. A parenting style that was supportive yet firm was the most helpful.

"... Parents who have high expectations and who provide caring home environments, with discipline conducive to learning, do much to raise the aspirations of their children and thus, impact their academic achievement..." (p.14).

Summarising research by Auerbach (2007) and Ingram, Wolfe and Lieberman (2007), the review suggests that such high parental expectations are most effective when school staff mirror them. The authors endorse Auerbach's conclusion that much of the research assumes a level playing field for all, and fails to take into account cultural differences in methods of parental involvement and the challenges some parents face from resistant school staff. Poor and working class parents have less power and influence over their children's education and parents who believe they have little influence in altering the status quo are less likely to try (Auerbach, 2007).

Some practical implications for both parents and schools are drawn from this literature review:

For parents: Caring environments with a proper balance of discipline and independence supplement high aspirations, maximising the effects for high academic achievement. Practical examples include: having home schedules (e.g. bedtimes and morning routines), providing an area for children to do their homework, transporting children to and from school and being interested in their schoolwork, but not overly so.

For school staff: Parents who are treated as if their concerns matter will have a closer rapport with the school system, which may translate to a better attitude toward their children's education.



Parents of minorities sometimes feel marginal when trying to communicate with school staff. They feel as if they are being treated as if they have little of value to contribute. Schools should make parents aware of the roles they can play which will help them help their children.

"...Treating students as if they are 'at risk', or treating their parents as if they have nothing of value to contribute to the school, hinders students academically. All students benefit from positive adult attitudes, both at home and at school. Schools should make parents aware of the roles they can play which will help them help their children. They should also value contributions of low income and minority parents, and take care to communicate that their contributions are valued' (p.14).

Edstar Incorporated (2007). Literature Review: Parent Involvement. Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

Available at URL address: http://www.edstar.us/nuggets/EDSTARLitRvw_FamInvolv.pdf



Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement. Do parents Know They Matter? (Harris & Goodall, 2007, UK)

This report by Professor Alma Harris and Dr Janet Goodall of the University of Warwick presents the findings from a research project focussing on the relationship between parental engagement and raising achievement.

Funded by the British Department for Education and Skills, the *Engaging Parents to Raise Achievement (EPRA)* project was intended to trial new ways of engaging parents in schools, particularly those parents seen as 'hard to reach'.

The project funded innovative work in more than one hundred secondary schools across England and was an important catalyst for innovation and change. It encouraged schools to prioritise parental engagement and provided them with the impetus to trial innovative approaches to working with parents.

The data showed that there was a positive relationship between increased parental engagement, particularly in the case of 'hard to reach parents', and improved attendance, behaviour and positive learning outcomes. Key findings were:

- Parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant.
- Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home, rather than supporting activities in the school.
- Many schools *involve* parents in school-based or school related activities. This constitutes parental *involvement* rather than parental *engagement*. Where these activities are not directly connected to learning they have little impact on pupil achievement.
- Parental engagement is linked to socio-economic status and to parental experience of education. Parents from certain ethnic and social groups are less likely to engage with the school, but can be encouraged through specific forms of support like literacy classes.
- The higher the level of the child's attainment, the more parents get involved.
- There are different perceptions of parental engagement. Parents view it as offering support to students while teachers tend to view it as a means to improved behaviour.
- Schools that successfully engage parents in learning, consistently reinforce the fact that 'parents matter'. They develop a two way relationship with parents based on mutual trust, respect and a commitment to improving learning outcomes.
- Parents who are viewed as 'hard to reach' often see the school as 'hard to reach'.
- Barriers to parental engagement include practical issues such as lack of time, language and literacy barriers, child care issues and the ability to negotiate the school system.



Key implications for schools

- Parental engagement must be a priority rather than a bolt-on extra. It needs to be fully embedded and integrated in teaching and learning plans, and built into forward planning.
- Communication with parents must be two way. Schools need to be clear about the aims of all communication with parents and to be prepared to listen and respond appropriately to parents' needs.
- Engaging 'hard to reach parents requires specific strategies that meet the need of the particular parent group.
- Schools should consider the uses of new technologies in engaging parents but with caution. Technology is not an end in itself. The main aim is to engage parents in learning as this is the most powerful way of raising achievement even in the most challenging contexts.

Harris, A. & Goodall, J. (2007). Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement. Do parents Know They Matter? Research Report DCSF-RW004, University of Warwick, UK.

Available at URL address: http://wiki.ict-register.net/images/0/0a/July_07_Every_parent_matters.pdf



Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence? (Hattie, 2003, NZ)

This paper by John Hattie from the University of Auckland (now Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute) presents the findings from an extensive review of the literature and some New Zealand research about the relative power of the teacher to make a difference in student achievement. Hattie considers the evidence for a range of influences such as what the student brings to the task, the curricula, the policy, the principal, the school climate, the teacher, the various teaching strategies, and the home.

Hattie concludes that **students' abilities** account for about 50% of the variance in achievement. He suggests that the **home** accounts for only about 5-10% of the variance. However he does qualify this by writing that 'the major effects of the home are already accounted for by the attributes of the student'. Interestingly, he suggests that home effects are more related to levels of expectation and encouragement (parents as co-educators) and certainly are not a function of the involvement of the parents or caregivers in the management of schools.

He suggests that the attributes of **schools**— the finances, the school size, the class size – account for only about 5-10% of the variance. **Peer effects** account for another 5-10% of the variance. While peers can have a positive effect on learning, there are also negative influences such as bullying and the way 'students create reputations around almost anything other than pride in learning'.

Teachers account for about 30% of the variance. 'It is what teachers know, do, and care about which is very powerful in this learning equation'.

Hattie notes that education initiatives and policies in New Zealand have focussed on the influences of the home and the structures of schools. 'We have poured more money into school buildings, school structures, we hear so much about reduced class sizes and new examinations and curricula, we ask parents to help manage schools and thus ignore their major responsibility to help co-educate, and we highlight student problems as if students are the problem...'

He suggests that the answer lies elsewhere – 'it lies in the person who gently closes the classroom door and performs the teaching act –the person who puts into place the end effects of so many policies, who interprets these policies, and who is alone with students during their 15,000 hours of schooling' (p.3).

Hattie then goes on to consider the differences between *expert* teachers and *experienced* teachers – particularly in terms of how they represent their classrooms, the degree of challenges that they present to students, and most critically, in the depth of processing that their students attain. Students who are taught by expert teachers exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students.

Hattie concludes that there is a need to focus on identifying, esteeming and encouraging excellent teachers. 'We work on the absurd assumption that all teachers are equal, which is patently not true to any child, any parent, any principal, and known by all teachers'.



He suggests that the best teachers are promoted out of the classroom, and that there are too few goalposts to aim for in professional development. We need 'a deeper representation of excellence in teachers, a greater challenge and commitment to recognizing excellence, and a coherent, integrated, high level of deep understanding about teacher expertise' (p.16).

Hattie, J. (2003). Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence? Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conference on Building Teacher Quality, Melbourne.

Available at URL address: <http://www.educationaleaders.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Building-effective-learning-environments/Teachers-Make-a-Difference-What-is-the-Research-Evidence>



A new Generation of Evidence: the Family is Critical to Student Achievement (Henderson & Berla, eds, 1994, USA).

Published by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, this is the third in the American *Evidence* series, following two earlier reports in the 80s that explored the literature on the importance of parental involvement in improving student achievement. This report covers 66 studies, reviews, reports, analyses, and books. Noting that the most accurate predictor of student achievement is the extent to which the family is involved in his or her education, Henderson & Berla present a collection of research papers on the function and importance of family to a student's achievement and education in school and the community. An ERIC search was conducted to identify relevant studies.

The research is divided into two categories:

1. *Studies on programs and interventions from early childhood through high school, including school policy.* This includes studies that evaluate the effects of programs and other interventions, including early childhood and preschool programs and home visits for families with infants and toddlers, programs to help elementary and middle schools work more closely with families, and high school programs and community efforts to support families in providing wider opportunities for young people.
2. *Studies on family processes.* This includes studies on the way that families behave and interact with their children, including the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement from the family perspective, characteristics of families as learning environments and their effects on student performance, and class and cultural mismatch.

Each study is summarised and key elements of the program and important findings are presented. There is a comprehensive index.

Major findings

1. The family makes critical contributions to student achievement, from earliest childhood through to high school. Efforts to improve children's outcomes are much more effective if they encompass their families.
2. When parents are involved in school, not just at home, children do better in school.
3. When parents are involved at school, their children go to better schools.
4. Children do best when their parents are enabled to play four key roles in their children's learning: teachers, supporters, advocates, and decision makers.
5. The more the relationship between home and school approaches a comprehensive, well-planned partnership, the higher the student achievement.
6. Families, schools and community organisations all contribute to student achievement. The best results come when all three work together.



Henderson & Berla reach some thought provoking conclusions, suggesting that while the benefits of effective collaborations and how to do them are well documented across all age ranges of schooling, they were not (in the 90s) in widespread practice. They argue that far too many American families are poorly served by a 'chaotic, unresponsive, and inequitable educational system' and that low test scores and high dropout rates 'degrade our workforce and signal a staggering waste of human potential' (p.19).

They point to a number of shortcomings, that if addressed could help to narrow the gap between the groups at the bottom of the social ladder and those who are more privileged. For example:

- There are obvious cost savings in quality pre-school programs that engage families, yet they are available to less than half the children who would most benefit from them.
- How schools and teachers can collaborate with families is not covered in the curricula of most teacher training institutions.
- Modest re-structuring of middle and high schools could make it possible for teachers to work with smaller groups of students and collaborate more closely with families – yet most secondary schools are organised along 'factory lines' the way they were 50 years ago.
- Most schools work in isolation from other community services. Yet there is ample evidence that community-wide collaborations to improve not only education but also the quality of life in the neighbourhoods where children grow up can boost achievement and strengthen families.

It would interesting to see how many of these observations are still being made in more recent literature reviews, and to ask how pertinent they are to the contemporary Australian context. Have educators and policy makers learnt from this 'new generation of evidence' from the nineties?

Henderson, A & Berla, N (1994) *A new Generation of Evidence: the Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, National Committee for Citizens in Education. USA. ERIC document <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED375968.pdf>



A New Wave of Evidence. The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Annual Synthesis 2002 (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, USA).

This substantial American publication is the fourth in the series of *Evidence* publications authored or co-authored by Anne Henderson, and the second in the series of publications by SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.

Its 233 pages provide a comprehensive overview of 51 studies conducted between 1993 and 2002 that examined the research literature on parent and community involvement and its impact on student achievement.

High standards for selecting studies were applied, requiring sound methodology and theory, thorough design and objective observation. For each of the 51 studies there is a summary of their methodology, key findings and conclusions.

The diverse range of studies covered:

- early childhood through high school
- all regions of the country
- diverse populations (income, race/ethnicity, educational level, and occupation)
- community as well as parent and family involvement
- a variety of methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and
- different sources of data (survey research, evaluations, case studies, experimental and quasi-experimental studies, and research reviews).

The studies reviewed are organised into three categories:

1. Impact of Parent and Community Involvement on Student Achievement
2. Effective Strategies to Connect Schools, Families, and Community
3. Parent and Community Organising Efforts to Improve Schools.

Another section provides a series of recommendations designed to help people put these findings into use in a practical way. There is also an Appendix which provides a brief overview of key earlier studies done between 1974 and 1995.

The report is well organised and easy to use with a good index and guides to the study summaries by topic and types of research. The report is written in reader-friendly language free of educational jargon, and many of the more complex statistical methods and results are explained and demystified.

The key findings should be clear to practitioners who are not researchers.



Summary of key findings (adapted from the summary chapter *In Short*, pages 7-8).

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for post secondary study, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school. When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, students make greater gains.

When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honour their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. And when families and communities organise to hold poorly performing schools accountable, studies suggest that school districts make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources.

How are the many ways that families are engaged in their children's education related to achievement?

Many studies found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to:

- earn higher grades and test scores, and enrol in higher-level programs
- be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- attend school regularly
- have better social skills, show improved behaviour, and adapt well to school
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

Several studies found that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children's learning at home. White, middle-class families, however, tend to be more involved at school. Supporting more involvement at school from all parents may be an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap.

Do programs and special efforts to engage families make a difference?

Yes, several studies found that they do. For example, teacher outreach to parents was related to strong and consistent gains in student performance in both reading and maths. The effective outreach practices included meeting face to face, sending materials home, and keeping in touch about progress. Workshops for parents on helping their children at home were linked to higher reading and maths scores. Schools with highly rated partnership programs made greater gains on state tests than schools with lower rated programs.



How do higher performing schools engage families and community?

Schools that succeed in engaging families from very diverse backgrounds share three key practices. They:

- focus on building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members
- recognise, respect, and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural difference
- embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared.

When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honour their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement.

What is the impact of parent and community organising on improving schools?

This type of engagement is based outside schools and led by parents and community members, and it is growing through the US. These efforts are aimed at schools that are low performing. Strategies of community organising are different from traditional parent involvement and are openly focused on building low-income families' power and political skills to hold schools accountable for results. A new group of studies found that community organising contributed to these changes in schools:

- Upgraded school facilities
- Improved school leadership and staffing
- Higher-quality learning programs for students
- New resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum
- New funding for after-school programs and family supports.

How can we put these findings into action?

- Recognize that all parents—regardless of income, education, or cultural background—are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well.
- Design programs that will support families to guide their children's learning, from preschool through high school.
- Develop the capacity of school staff to work with families.
- Link efforts to engage families, whether based at school or in the community, to student learning.
- Build families' social and political connections.



- Focus efforts to engage families and community members on developing trusting and respectful relationships.
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power with families. Make sure that parents, school staff, and community members understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise.
- Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.
- Include families in all strategies to reduce the achievement gap among white, middle-class students and low-income, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse students.

This is an invaluable resource which will be of great relevance to principals, teachers and other school staff, members of school boards, policy makers including MPs and education department staff at state and national levels, parent associations, parent and community leaders, researchers, and students.

It is a very useful overview of the research and includes some very practical steps for schools wanting to implement strategies to better engage families in improving student achievement, provide sustainable support for families, and link to community groups. It is highly relevant to the Australian context.

Henderson, A & Mapp, K. (2002) *A New Wave of Evidence. The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Annual Synthesis 2002. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) 2002.

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>



Parental Involvement in Middle School: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Strategies that Promote Achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009, USA).

Hill and Tyson observe that although there is a growing body of literature focusing on parental involvement in education during middle school, this research has not been systematically examined to determine which types of involvement have the strongest relation with achievement.

Their research responds to this gap by conducting a meta-analysis of 50 studies on parental involvement in middle school.

The paper focuses on the significant role of families, family–school relations, and parental involvement in promoting educational achievement in early adolescence, when academic performance often declines.

Hill & Tyson found that parental involvement was positively associated with achievement, with the exception of some forms of home based involvement such as parental help with homework. School-based involvement was moderately positive in its association with achievement.

However, in the middle school parental involvement is unlikely to entail a direct classroom presence, but is more likely to entail assisting teachers with preparation, fundraising, administrative duties, or committee work.

As such, this type of involvement does not directly provide parents with knowledge about instructional styles and course content that will facilitate their involvement with their children’s schoolwork. Furthermore, as adolescents become more independent, they often do not want their parents to visit the school, and want to be trusted to manage their own responsibilities.

The most salient type of parental involvement – that which had the strongest positive association with achievement, and was most consistent with the developmental stage of early adolescence – was that which reflected *academic socialisation*.

This is described as involvement which creates an understanding about the purposes, goals, and meaning of academic performance; communicates expectations about involvement; and provides the types of strategies that will scaffold adolescents’ burgeoning autonomy, independence, and cognitive abilities. In practical terms *academic socialisation* includes parents’:

- communication of their expectations for achievement and value for education
- fostering educational and occupational aspirations in their adolescents
- discussing learning strategies with children, and
- making preparations and plans for the future, including linking material discussed in school with students’ interests and goals.



As a parental involvement strategy *academic socialisation* is not dependent on unfeasible goals such as the development of deep, high-quality relationships with each teacher. Rather, it is dependent on parents' knowledge about how to navigate the middle school context, which is information that can be provided through communications between the school and home, including electronic communications. This type of involvement can be solicited by adolescents as they assess their own needs and direct their interests and trajectories.

One very important policy implication arising from this meta-analysis is that there may be quite significant socio-economic and ethnic or other demographic differences influencing parents' knowledge and resources and schools' ability to provide relevant information to them. It is imperative therefore, that a broad range of developmentally and culturally appropriate, practical involvement strategies for middle schools are identified.

Lack of guidance was seen as the primary reason that some academically able students did not attend postsecondary institutions after high school.

'Without effective parental involvement, adolescents' opportunities are often foreclosed, leading to lost potential, unrealized talent, diminished educational and vocational attainment, and widening demographic gaps in achievement.'

Hill, N & Tyson, D (2009) 'Parental Involvement in Middle School: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Strategies That Promote Achievement', *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 740–763, American Psychological Association 2009. Downloadable from: <http://pdfcast.org/download/parental-involvement-in-middle-school-a-meta-analytic-assessment-of-the-strategies-that-promote-achievement.pdf>



Why Do Parents Become Involved? Research Findings and Implications (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins & Closson, 2005, USA)

In the mid nineties Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler described their model of why parents become involved in their children's education and how this influences student outcomes. Since then considerable conceptual and empirical work has been undertaken to enhance understanding of the processes they described. In this article, the authors review recent research relating to the model's initial question: *Why do parents become involved in children's education?* They then offer suggestions for further research and for school and family practices that may strengthen the effectiveness of parental involvement across varied school communities.

Primarily taking a psychological perspective, and with a restricted focus on parents who are involved in their children's education to at least some degree, the article takes a close look at personal and contextual constructs that may explain why parents become involved.

Their review of the literature suggests that parents' decisions about becoming involved in their children's education are influenced by:

- role construction for involvement (a sense of personal or shared responsibility for the child's educational outcomes and beliefs about being engaged in supporting these)
- sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed in school (the belief that personal actions will help the child learn)
- perception of invitations to involvement (from school, teacher, and student)
- life-context variables (skills and knowledge, time and energy)
- school responsiveness to these life-context variables.

They conclude that one of the most important findings in this literature is that parents' decisions about involvement are influenced by schools. Specifically, the research suggests that schools may take steps to enhance parents' active role construction and sense of efficacy for helping children learn; enact practices that support school, teacher, and student invitations to involvement; and adapt involvement requests and suggestions to the circumstances of parents' life contexts.

They outline some specific strategies (presented here in outline only, without examples):

Strategies to increase schools' capacities for inviting parental involvement

- Create an inviting, welcoming school climate
- Empower teachers for parental involvement; create dynamic, systematic, and consistent school attention to improving family-school relationships
- Learn about parents' goals, perspectives on child's learning, family circumstances, culture



- Join with existing parent-teacher-family structures to enhance involvement
- Offer full range of involvement opportunities, including standard approaches (e.g. parent-teacher conferences, student performances) and new opportunities unique to school and community (e.g. first-day-of school celebrations, parent workshops, social/networking events)
- Invite teachers, parents, principal, and staff to student-centred events at school.

Strategies to Enhance Parents' Capacities for Effective Involvement

- Communicate clearly that *all* parents have an important role to play in children's school success
- Give parents specific information about *what* they can do to be involved
- Give parents specific information about the general *effects* of involvement on student learning
- Give parents specific information on *how* their involvement activities influence learning
- Give parents specific information about curriculum and learning goals
- Offer parents positive feedback on the effects of their involvement
- Create and support parent and parent-teacher networks in the school.

Some suggestions for further research

- More longitudinal investigations of role construction for parental involvement and its development across a school year or sequential years.
- Attention to the effects of parents' experiences with the sources of efficacy. For example: Is verbal persuasion alone likely to increase efficacy for helping children succeed in school? Is direct mastery experience necessary for increases in parent efficacy? If so, what kinds of experiences are most effective? How can parents' efficacy for helping children succeed be best supported across the school years and varied school communities?
- Continued research should seek teacher and parent evaluations of varied aspects of invitations with an eye toward increasing their effectiveness in supporting student learning (For teachers: How effective are your invitations in eliciting specific parent support for student learning? For parents: Are the invited activities feasible?)
- Closer examination of elements of parental involvement and attention not only to what parents are doing but how they are doing it across a range of involvement activities.



- The use of multiple sources and measures to allow triangulation of essential perspectives on involvement (e.g. parent self-reports, student reports, observer reports). Similarly, the consistent use of multiple reporters across variables included in studies (e.g. parents and students as reporters of involvement; parents, students, and teachers as reporters of outcomes of interest)
- More detailed analyses of the mechanisms through which parents' involvement influences student outcomes. A major reason for studying *why* parents become involved is to obtain a more accurate and useful understanding of *what* parents do, having chosen to be involved, and *how* what they do influences student outcomes.

Conclusion

Overall, when schools take steps to motivate parental involvement, they support parents' effectiveness in helping their children learn. Similarly, when school systems attempt to promote teacher and principal contributions to effective parental involvement, they support schools' effectiveness in educating children. The public mandate for the effective education of all citizens would seem to require nothing less than strong school and community efforts to enable the many contributions that parents can make to their children's educational success.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S. and Closson, K. (2005). 'Why Do Parents Become Involved? Research Findings and Implications'. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106, 2, 105 - 130.

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/papers/Hoover-Dempsey2005.pdf>



Narrowing the Gap in Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups: A review of the research evidence (Kendall, Straw, Jones, Springate, & Grayson, 2008, UK).

This British report presents findings from a review of best evidence for improving outcomes for vulnerable and under-achieving groups of children and young people, and narrowing the gap between these groups and all children and young people.

In working towards narrowing this gap, Local Authorities in Britain targeted a number of specific areas such as transition from primary to secondary school, early intervention, and the engagement of parents and carers.

Their work was linked to five outcome areas identified in the Every Child Matters (ECM) program. This report documents key findings from the international literature in all of these areas, but this summary focuses only on the strategy of engaging parents and carers.

Key findings:

- Whole-family interventions that target vulnerable parents and carers and support them to develop better parenting skills have been found to have positive impacts on the 'be healthy', 'stay safe', 'make a positive contribution' and 'achieve economic well-being' ECM outcomes.
- A stimulating home learning environment can narrow the gap in attainment for vulnerable groups, as well as improving outcomes for all children and can lead to lasting gains in social and cognitive development.
- There is some evidence that targeted family learning programmes, where children and parents learn together, could bring about improved attainment for children from vulnerable groups.
- Parenting support programmes have reduced behaviour problems in children and adolescents.
- The actions of strategic leaders in planning and targeting parenting programmes can improve outcomes.
- Schools can engage parents and carers to improve outcomes for children and young people. It is important that they build trusting, collaborative relationships, make parents a priority and listen to and consult with parents, especially those from 'hard-to-reach' groups.
- Programmes that are relevant and tailored to parents' needs are effective, as are those that have a sound theoretical base for their general approach.
- Parenting programmes need sustained funding to have the most lasting effect.



The authors concluded that the research evidence regarding the positive benefits of *parenting programmes* was robust, but that more evidence is required about the impact of generally engaging parents in their children's education. In addition, a more longitudinal perspective is required to understand the true impact on children and young people from parental engagement.

Kendall, S., Straw, S., Jones, M., Springate, I. & Grayson, H. (2008) *Narrowing the Gap in Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups: A review of the research evidence*, National Foundation for Education Research, Berkshire, UK.

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/LNG01/LNG01.pdf>



Parental engagement: social and economic effects (Muller, for the Australian Parents Council, 2009, Aust)

This research paper commissioned by the Australian Parents Council and written by Dr Denis Muller, addresses the central question of:

Whether and how parents who are engaged in the education of their children build social capital, promote social inclusion, and boost participation in the economy and add to productivity.

The paper presents the findings from a literature review, augmented with four Australian case studies. Muller notes that over the past 25 years or so the traditional boundaries between the role of home and school have become blurred, with a range of strategies being developed for engaging parents in the education of their children. This includes programs to:

- develop family, school and community partnerships
- help raise awareness in parents about the benefits of becoming engaged in their children's education, and providing them with the skills to do so
- help students and families cope with grief and loss, and
- strengthen families' capacity to deal with the everyday demands of raising children.

Muller cites research evidence illustrating that action to stimulate a partnership involving parents, communities and schools can catalyse parental engagement, but that the impetus must come from the school. Citing some American research he suggests that teachers often welcome contact with parents when *they* (teachers) initiate it, but were often resentful of parent-initiated contact.

Funding for parental engagement initiatives is crucial. Muller suggests that programs to promote partnerships between parents and schools need sustainable resourcing, for example by funding schools to employ a parent liaison officer. His own research on a program to engage Indigenous parents in the education of their children showed that 'the sustainability of what was a highly successful program was contingent on there being sufficient funding to create and maintain an appropriate support structure'.

Muller argues that programs that engage parents and communities ought not be assessed only in terms of their effects on student outcomes, but that they can also generate 'wider and lasting benefits for parents and the community, which can feed directly into improvements in the life quality and economic wellbeing of individuals, the social capital of communities and the fortunes of the economy generally'.

He cites research findings on parent engagement programs in Australia which show that 'they have the capacity to not only engage parents in the education of their children, but to build self-esteem, raise skills, open pathways and in some cases lead directly to employment for parents' (p.20).



Parental engagement is thus seen as generating effects in two directions: towards outcomes for individual students, and towards developing social capital in communities. In turn, 'social capital is an important influence on the development of cognitive and non-cognitive skills in young people, and both of these skill sets are necessary for successful and productive engagement in the economy. This shows up in employment rates and in earnings levels' (p.21).

Muller's literature review reveals a pattern of interacting and reciprocating forces. 'Schools that generate partnerships with parents and the community also generate parental engagement in the education of children. Children do better educationally when their parents are engaged in their education. Engagement of the community leads to a building of social capital.

Children who grow up in circumstances where their parents are engaged in their education, and in communities that enjoy high social capital, develop better cognitive and non-cognitive skills, both of which contribute directly to academic progress, participation in employment and economic well-being' (p.21).

He concludes that, given the high rate of return on a dollar of spending on education, especially in the early years, there is a strong public-policy argument for government investment in promoting parental engagement in their children's education.

Muller, D (2009) *Parental engagement: social and economic effects*, Australian Parents Council.



Parent Engagement and Leadership (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005, Canada).

This research report is a highly engaging account of a study of parent engagement and leadership at Princess Alexandra Community School (pre-Kindergarten – Grade eight) in Saskatoon, Canada. A large research team of parents, teachers, teacher assistants, community and adult educators, administrators and teacher educators worked with the principal researchers. The idea was to ‘do research *with* the school rather than *on* the school’.

The authors emphasise that their focus was on parent *engagement* rather than on parent *involvement*, explaining that their work therefore differs in many ways from typologies of parent involvement such as Joyce Epstein’s.

It differs in that it recognizes that both educators and parents hold knowledge; it promotes teacher and parent knowledge being acted upon in side-by-side relationships, resulting in shared power and decision-making, and mutually established agendas; and it calls for reciprocal benefit for schools and families in all parent engagement practices (p.15).

Quoting the words of a principal, Pushor & Ruitenberg write that:

Parent engagement is not about what you have to do – about taking part in typical and taken-for-granted practices such as parent/teacher conferences and Meet the Teacher nights. Parent engagement is about what you get to do – about moving inward to look closely at your assumptions and beliefs, both individually and collectively with others; to be both a host and a guest on a school landscape; to build trust and relationships with parents. It is about what you have the chance to do – to make a difference in the lives of children and their parents as you work alongside them in the important work of teaching and learning (p.69).

The methodological approach used in this research was *narrative inquiry* – a focus on people’s lives and how they are lived. The intention in this narrative inquiry was to understand staff and parents at Princess Alexandra from their own perspective. So the research data consisted largely of the co-researchers’ and participants stories of their experiences, told from their perspectives and in their own words. Several main themes emerged from this data:

- *Assumptions and Beliefs:* The staff were consciously working in practical ways to live their positive *assumptions* about parents and *beliefs* about the engagement of parents within their school.
- *Invitation and Hospitality:* *Hospitality* was not about teachers and administrators inviting people to their place, but about creating a place that is owned as much by students, parents, and other community members as it is by staff and administrators.
- *Trust and Relationships:* Practices in the school moved away from the institutionalized, ritualistic, and often public interactions between teachers and parents typical of most school landscapes to an emphasis on building *trust* and *relationships* in ways which are much less formal and more intimate.



The report concludes that attending to structures, both within and outside the school, can facilitate inclusive effective parent engagement. Such structures include staffing and orientation practices, teacher education curriculum, and decision-making processes that are inclusive of parents and other caregivers.

The visual style of the report replicates the research methodology. There are photos, sketches, snatches of first person narratives, journal notes, stories, scanned documents. The voices of the research authors speak continuously along the bottom half of each page and the voices of the co-researchers and participants are represented on the top. Sometimes one story will literally break into another story. At other times a piece of information may be pushed to the background by a new way of seeing.

These are all deliberate visual and verbal strategies designed to disrupt the reader's expectations of a research report. Be prepared to be challenged and provoked into new ways of thinking about parent engagement!

Pushor, D. & Ruitenberg, C. (2005). *Parent Engagement and Leadership*. Research report No.134, Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching, Saskatoon, SK.
http://www.mcdowellfoundation.ca/main_mcdowell/projects/research_rep/134_parent_engagement.pdf



Types of parents and school strategies aimed at the creation of effective partnerships (Smit, Driessen, Sluiter & Slegers, 2007, The Netherlands).

The purpose of this Dutch study was to attain a better understanding of what diverse groups of parents expect of their children's education and the school and then to develop a framework for school strategies to involve these different types of parents. The research included a review of the literature, consultation with expert panels, a web survey of school leaders, focus groups and case studies.

The authors refer to the extensive literature showing big differences in how, and how much, parents are involved in the education of their children, both at home and at school. The differences have been found to be associated with social and ethnic background, educational background of the mother, material deprivation, and the psycho-social health of the mother.

Smit et al. also suggest that the extent to which the child is open to parental involvement is the strongest predictor of parental involvement at home, while parental involvement at school depends primarily on the extent to which teachers invite such involvement.

The study identified six types of parents with different attitudes to involvement and participation: *the supporter, the absentee, the politician, the career-maker, the tormentor and the super parent.*

The results showed parents in 'white' schools to support teachers during activities (*parents as supporters*). Non-minority parents and certainly those from higher social milieus were accustomed to having a say in school matters (*parents as politicians*), but in schools with many disadvantaged pupils, little or no attention was paid to having parents have a say in school matters.

A bottleneck in 'white' schools was that parents do not have time to participate due to their work (*career parents*). A bottleneck in 'black' schools is that parents do not perceive themselves as qualified to participate (*absentee parents*).

A very engaging chart describes the characteristics of these different types of parents and offers very practical and candid suggestions for reaching them and involving them in effective partnerships.

The strategies are oriented towards the following core points: development of a vision of parental participation; expansion of the visibility and approachability of the school team via the creation of contact moments; attention to the concerns of parents; connection to what parents find interesting and have an affinity with; an eye for the quality of the communication between school and parents; stimulation of creativity and initiative; and giving parents time to learn something from the school team.

To develop such strategies the authors suggest that teachers need new knowledge and new skills in order to interact more effectively with parents and encourage their involvement. The framework they suggest for this encompasses:



- (1) information about the objectives of parental involvement, advantages, barriers, knowledge, skills, attitudes
- (2) knowledge of families and differences with regard to culture, child-raising, living situations
- (3) two-way home-school communication
- (4) involvement of parents in learning situations, also outside the school
- (5) support of schools by parents both inside and outside the school
- (6) support of families by the school
- (7) families as agents of change with respect to decision-making, policy development, curricula and programmes, and training of parents and teachers.

Smit, F., Driessen, G., Sluiter, R. & Slegers, P. (2007). 'Types of parents and school strategies aimed at the creation of effective partnerships'. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, 1, 0, 45 - 52.

<http://www.ernape.net/ejournal/index.php/IJPE/article/viewFile/23/13>



Parent Involvement in Urban Charter Schools: A new paradigm or the status quo? (Smith & Wohlstetter, 2009, USA).

This study of parent involvement in 12 urban charter schools in six American states raises some interesting issues for parents choosing Catholic or Independent schools in Australia. The majority of American Charter schools have been established in urban areas and disproportionately serve minority and low SES students.

Charter schools are seen as schools of choice and more autonomous than public schools, with missions tailored to their student populations. The rise of the charter school movement is seen as an opportunity for urban parents to play a more central role in the education of their children. Parent participation in management decisions is frequently written into the schools' policies and codes of practice.

Charter schools, as schools of choice, have been assumed to have fewer involvement barriers for minority and low income parents, but a 2007 survey of charter leaders found that parent involvement remains a significant challenge. Barriers continue to exist, particularly for urban, low-income, immigrant, minority and working-class parents. Language barriers, work schedules, and a sense of disenfranchisement have generally resulted in lower levels of parent involvement by working-class parents in urban schools; in particular, those from ethnic and racial minorities.

Smith & Wohlstetter set out to investigate specific strategies employed by charter schools characterised by strong family *engagement* (as distinct from parent *involvement*), in order to examine whether a new paradigm has emerged. Using Joyce Epstein's typology, they found evidence of all six types of Epstein's parent activities, as presented in the following chart:

Type of partnership	Examples
<i>Basic obligations of families</i>	Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school on time; school provides English language classes, parenting classes, 'wrap around services' to supplement parents' ability to provide health and safety for their children.
<i>Basic obligations of schools</i>	Home visits are conducted; material sent home is translated into the parents' native language; translators at school meetings can decrease language barriers.
<i>Involvement at school</i>	Parents help in classrooms, serve as crossing guards before/after school, attend field trips and special events, help out in the office, participate in school beautification.



<i>Involvement in learning activities at home</i>	Parents are required to read with their children, monitor their child's homework completion with a homework checklist; can take home activity books to do with their children.
<i>Involvement in decision making, governance, & advocacy</i>	Parents participate in focus groups, complete surveys, serve on the school's governing board.
<i>Collaboration and exchanges with community organisations</i>	School partners with community organisations to help train parents, offer volunteer opportunities for parents, or provide services to parents.

However, while the parent involvement activities they found fitted Epstein's typology fairly well, the strategies used to implement these activities, and to attract parents traditionally not as active in school, were quite innovative. Relevant activities associated with each of Epstein's types were:

1. Schools realised that many of the parents face situations which hinder their ability to fulfil their basic obligations, such as working multiple shifts, raising their children as single parents, and struggling with poverty. To help parents meet their children's basic needs, several of the study schools offered 'wrap around' services for the students and their families, including social services such as employment-seeking assistance and parenting skills counselling.
2. Extremely high attendance rates at parent-teacher conferences were secured by offering incentives (eg. a lottery) for attendance, as well as offering meetings at night, by phone, or in the family's home, to help ensure participation.
3. 'Parent contracts' were used to specify the number of volunteer hours required from each family annually and help sustain parent involvement programs. In addition, the type of volunteer activity often included school maintenance or beautification, and school leaders noted the sense of 'ownership' derived from such activities.
4. Technology was used by some schools as a means of notifying parents of volunteer opportunities as well as tracking parent involvement. This had the benefits of instant, two-way communication as well as reducing the time costs associated with the school calling parents or sending home newsletters. In one school, each teacher maintained a web page, updating it weekly with homework assignments, learning objectives, reference web sites visited in class, and news of upcoming class events. Print and telephone communication were also used.



5. Some charter schools involved and empowered parents in decision-making and governance of the school to an extent not typically found in traditional public schools. In some cases, parents elected the charter school's governing board, making the board directly accountable to them. In other cases, parents served as members of the charter school's board of directors.
6. Finally, parent involvement in the study schools was often linked with increasing parent's self efficacy. In some cases training, via pamphlets, workshops and meetings, was provided to help parents become comfortable with school involvement. This was particularly important for parents whose cultural norms dictate that school staff members are the 'experts' with parents on the sidelines.

Smith and Wohlstetter's findings suggest the emergence of a new paradigm in parent engagement in these schools. While the study schools differed in school size, percent of English literacy, and student ethnicity, these factors did not appear to influence the different strategies that schools employed.

Rather, a mission of parent involvement and dedication to reaching parents not typically involved in education in traditional public schools took precedence.

Smith, J. & Wohlstetter, P. (2009). *Parent Involvement in Urban Charter Schools: A new paradigm or the status quo?* School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District and Community Contexts Conference, Vanderbilt University, October 25 - 27. http://www.vanderbilt.edu/schoolchoice/conference/papers/Smith%20-Wohlstetter_COMPLETE.pdf



Beyond Random Acts: family, school and community engagement as an integral part of education reform. (Weiss, Lopez & Rosenberg, 2010, USA).

This paper was used to set the stage at an American national policy forum held in Washington in November 2010. The forum was designed to bring to the centre a topic that has been on the periphery of education reform – family, school, and community engagement (FSCE) as a strategy to support student success in the twenty-first century. This paper was designed to start the conversation and to help shape the role that federal policy will play in supporting family school community partnerships in schools across the country.

Weiss et al. argue that the current state of practice, in which educators treat parents and families as bystanders, has to be disrupted. They suggest that family and community engagement is siloed into disparate programs that are disconnected from instructional practice and school strategies. These *random acts* of family involvement have to give way to systemic and sustained approaches. Family engagement is defined as a *shared responsibility* of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement. It is seen as being *continuous* from birth to young adulthood and occurring *across multiple settings* where children learn.

The authors point out that the notion of family engagement is not in itself a new idea. Over 40 years of research has confirmed that it improves school readiness, student academic achievement and graduation rates. But what is new is a reform strategy in which family engagement is **systemic, integrated and sustained**, not an add-on or a random act. **Systemic** here means family engagement that is purposefully designed as a core component of educational goals such as school readiness or student achievement. **Integrated** engagement will be embedded into structures and processes including training and professional development, teaching and learning, community collaboration, and the use of data for continuous improvement and accountability. **Sustainable** engagement will have adequate resources including public-private partnerships, to ensure effective strategies with the power to impact on student learning and achievement.

The paper illustrates its argument with case studies from a number of American districts and schools, and builds a framework for family engagement for successful school reform in which the following mutually dependent elements – a focus on teaching and learning, a rigorous curriculum, teacher and principal effectiveness, a positive school climate, and family and community engagement—operate as parts of an interconnected system. Such work requires policy change and the use of data to identify meaningful indicators of family, school and community engagement. The paper argues that sharing student learning and performance data with families can change the conversation and give parents a voice, empowering them as partners in their children’s academic growth. Such engagement can be a force for turning around low performing schools. However, the orientation must move from checklists to full engagement plans with outcome tracking. They conclude that ‘schools can’t work well if their relationships with families and communities don’t work well’.

Weiss, H.B, Lopez, M. E. & Rosenberg, H. (2010). *Beyond Random Acts: family, school and community engagement as an integral part of education reform*. Paper prepared for the National Policy Forum for Family, School and Community Engagement, December.
<http://www.nyspirc.org/info/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Beyond-Random-Acts-HFRP.pdf>



Breaking New Ground: data systems transform family engagement in education.(Weiss, Lopez & Stark, 2011, USA).

The purpose of this American issue brief is to establish a vision of family engagement in the context of data-driven education reform. The authors argue that the family–school–community relationship has been, at best, on the margins of education policy, quoting the US Department of Education concession in 2010 that ‘family engagement is too often focused on a checklist of activities rather than on driving results, funding isn’t always targeted to the most effective practices, and family engagement is treated as a discrete activity rather than as an integrated strategy that should have a place across multiple programs’.

Weiss et al. argue that classroom-only reforms are inadequate approaches to closing the achievement gap and preparing students for a global workplace. New directions in education planning are shifting from school-centred to *student*-centred learning, where students learn inside and outside of the classroom, set personalised learning goals and strive towards mastery of skills for the real world. And one of the most powerful influences on these new directions is family engagement in children’s education.

However, parents often do not have timely and relevant information about their children and are at a loss to support student learning in specific and practical ways. Parents benefit from having information about key indicators—such as student attendance, growth in learning, and achievement—on which they can have an impact. These data open the door for meaningful conversations with teachers and students.

While the use of data is not seen as a panacea for today’s educational challenges, it is seen as a starting point for communication and action within the complex web of relationships that exists between districts, schools, early childhood programs, families, and community organisations serving children and youth. The paper uses case examples from four American school districts to demonstrate how:

- Student data can support a continuous pathway of engagement
- Sharing data with families can begin in the earliest years
- Student data can shift the family engagement paradigm
- Access to student data can catalyse year-round support of learning
- Immigrant families can be empowered to keep teens on the path to graduation
- Student data can be used to promote university and career-readiness.

The authors conclude that ‘a data pathway for families to support student achievement is an idea whose time has come. It connects with current trends in education that focus on 21st century learning and the vital role of technology, and catapults family engagement into this new era of transformation’.



They suggest a number of practical ways that Education policy can support schools and districts to implement such a transformation through developing accessible, understandable, and actionable data pathways that acknowledge families as end-users.

Weiss, H. B., Lopez, M. E. & Stark, D. R. (2011). *Breaking New Ground: data systems transform family engagement in education*. Harvard Family Research Project, Issue Brief, January.

http://www.pta.org/Breaking_New_Ground.pdf



Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement (Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009, USA).

This American paper begins by acknowledging that there is wide consensus that family engagement is a critical ingredient for children's school success 'from cradle to career'. The range of benefits include improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behaviour, and increased likelihood of high school graduation.

They point out that policymakers, practitioners, and researchers have all recognised family engagement as a critical intervention strategy that maximizes return on other investments in education. Investing in family engagement can therefore be cost effective. Citing the American researchers Houtenville & Conway (2008) they provide a compelling statistic on this:

Schools would have to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved parent brings.

The paper examines the role that school districts can play in building systemic family engagement as a core strategy so that parents, educators and administrators *share responsibility* for it, producing student success.

While Australia's education systems do not directly parallel the district systems described here, many of the conclusions are still relevant to our school practice at local and state levels and at the federal policy level. The authors identify the following core components of systemic family engagement:

- **Fostering district-wide strategies.**
- **Building school** capacity – through ongoing professional development and technical assistance for principals, teachers, and other school staff who deal with parents, and programs to help schools welcome and involve families in their children's learning.
- **Reaching out to and engaging families** to encourage high expectations for their children's learning at school and at home, and to develop and share concrete strategies for engagement that supports student success. This happens through leadership development training, listening tours to gather input and workshops that impart information and skills focused on student learning.

Promising Practices

Five best practices that ensure that family engagement efforts are interconnected and strategic are identified from data from six American school districts. These promising practices are:

1. **A shared vision of family engagement** — from senior administrators to classroom teachers and bus drivers. Districts move beyond the traditional focus on parents attending events at the school, to recognizing that sometimes schools cannot *see*, but can still *support*, what happens at home.



2. **Purposeful connections to learning.** From the district's strategic plan and school improvement plans to parent-teacher conferences, these districts demonstrate an unyielding commitment to family engagement as a *core* instructional strategy, as opposed to an *add-on*.
3. **Investments in high quality programming and staff.** There is strategic use of limited resources, often adroitly piecing together multiple public and private funding streams. Charismatic leaders with expertise in family involvement staff family engagement offices, and volunteers are used.
4. **Robust communication systems.** Stakeholders reach out to one another to share information in reciprocal and meaningful ways to ensure they can make decisions and implement strategies effectively.
5. **Evaluation for accountability and continuous learning.** District family engagement staff recognise family engagement data can be a lever for change, but meaningful indicators of their work and data systems are still needed. Evaluation efforts often hinge on persuading teachers, principals, and district offices to take family involvement data seriously. Data needs to be both collected and also used, as information feeds into planning and improvement.

Westmoreland, H., Rosenberg, H., Lopez, E. & Weiss, H. (2009) *Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement*, Harvard Family Research Project & National PTA, *Issue Brief*, July 2009.

www.hfrp.org/content/download/3420/98238/.../SeeingIsBelieving.pdf



Parental Involvement in Education (Williams, Williams & Ullman, 2003, UK)

The British government's strategy for involving parents in their children's education, first described in the 1997 White Paper *Excellence in Schools*, recognised that students need support from parents to ensure they reach their full potential. The strategy had three strands: providing information to parents, giving parents a more effective voice and encouraging families to learn together. Various initiatives were subsequently implemented by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), including the requirement that schools develop Home-School Agreements in consultation with parents to establish the roles and responsibilities of both parents and schools in building up a partnership to raise standards in education.

This report presents the findings of a large-scale telephone survey of 2019 households with children aged 5 - 16 attending state schools in Britain. The aim of the survey was to assess the impact of the Department's initiatives by measuring parent involvement over time. Specifically, it examined:

- the level of involvement parents have in their children's education, focusing on:
 - practical help in schools
 - relationship with teachers
 - involvement with homework
- what parents perceive as barriers to further involvement
- the awareness of Government initiatives and information sources
- how parents find out about their child's progress at school and what improvements they think could be made to communication with schools.

Conclusions

- Only a minority of parents felt fully involved in their child's school life. For some this was acceptable, but others wanted to increase their involvement substantially. However, few parents believed this could be achieved easily, with most resigned to the fact that competing demands on their time (eg. work commitments, demands of other children, childcare difficulties,) will always restrict their involvement.
- Almost all parents were happy with the school's attitude towards them, with a large majority finding the school welcoming (94%) and willing to involve them (84%). Secondary schools were not seen as so welcoming, though there was little evidence of dissatisfaction with the way these schools communicate.
- There was strong support for extra-curricular initiatives that enable parents to help out, but there was also recognition that these kinds of projects place extra demands upon schools.



- Parents seemed largely happy with the quality of written communication coming from schools, although a significant minority (27%) felt the general information – as opposed to child-specific – was spoilt by jargon. Parents who had left school at 16 were most likely to feel this way. However, most parents (85%) were happy with the quality of information provided, saying that the school gave clear information about how their child was getting on.
- Information sources, such as *Parent-School* magazines, were welcomed but not regarded as the equivalent of face-to-face contact with teachers. Teachers were very highly regarded by parents. Many parents took every opportunity to speak with them and especially enjoyed the informal contact in playgrounds. However, a significant minority (16%) felt that they would be labelled as ‘trouble makers’ if they talked too much.
- It may be that one of the consequences of prizing face-to-face contact with teachers is that parents ignore other sources. Many parents were unaware of the various labels given to recent education initiatives. More than one in three (35%) did not recognise the term ‘Home School Agreement’, despite the fact that all of them should have been invited to sign one. This lack of awareness suggests that parents are skim-reading written information, expecting teachers to tell them all they need to know. Many parents who claimed to want more involvement were waiting for the school to tell them what they could do, rather than actively finding out for themselves.

Williams, B., Williams, J. & Ullman, A. (2002) *Parental Involvement in Education*, DfES Research Report 332. <http://education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR332.pdf>



Bibliography

- Auerbach, S. (2007). 'From moral supporters to struggling Advocates: Reconceptualizing parent roles in education through the experience of working-class families of color'. *Urban Education*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 50-283. Available from URL: <http://uex.sagepub.com/content/42/3/250>
- Berthelsen, D. & Walker, S. (2008). 'Parents' involvement in their children's education', *Family Matters*, vol. 9, Australian Institute of Family Studies. Available from URL: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2008/fm79/bw.pdf>
- Bull, A., Brooking, K. & Campbell, R. (2008). *Successful home-school partnerships*. Report prepared for Ministry of Education by New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Available from URL: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/28415/3>
- Clark, C. (2009). *Why fathers matter to their children's literacy*, National Literacy Trust. Available from URL: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0770/Father_review_2009.pdf
- Desforges, C. with Abouchar, A. (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievements and adjustment: A literature review*, London: Department for Education and Skills. Available from URL: http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/files_uploaded/uploaded_resources/18617/Desforges.pdf
- Edstar Inc. (2007). *Literature review: Parent involvement*. Available from URL: http://www.edstar.us/nuggets/EDSTARLitRvw_FamInvolv.pdf
- Harris, A. & Goodall, J. (2007). *Engaging parents in raising achievement: Do parents know they matter?*. Research Report DCSF-RW004, UK, University of Warwick. Available from URL: http://wiki.ict-register.net/images/0/0a/July_07_Every_parent_matters.pdf
- Hattie, J. (2003, October). *Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?*. Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conference on Building Teacher Quality, Melbourne: Australia. Available from URL: <http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Building-effective-learning-environments/Teachers-Make-a-Difference-What-is-the-Research-Evidence>
- Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*, Washington DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education. Available from URL: <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED375968.pdf>
- Henderson, A. & Mapp, K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Texas: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). Available from URL: <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>
- Hill, N. & Tyson, D. (2009). 'Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement'. *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 740-763. Available from : <http://pdfcast.org/download/parental-involvement-in-middle-school-a-meta-analytic-assessment-of-the-strategies-that-promote-achievement.pdf>
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S. & Closson, K. (2005). 'Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications'. *The Elementary School Journal*, vol. 106, no. 2, pp. 105-130. Available from URL: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/papers/Hoover-Dempsey2005.pdf>



- Kendall, S., Straw, S., Jones, M., Springate, I. & Grayson, H. (2008). *Narrowing the gap in outcomes for vulnerable groups: A review of the research evidence*. Berkshire, UK: National Foundation for Education Research (NFER). Available from URL
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/LNG01/LNG01.pdf>
- Muller, D. (2009). *Parental engagement: Social and economic effects*. Tasmania, Australia: Australian Parents Council.
http://www.austparents.edu.au/assets/files/pdfs/Muller_Australian%20Parents%20Council_Parental%20Engagement_Social%20and%20Economic%20Effects_Final_2009.pdf
- Pushor, D. & Ruitenberg, C. (2005). *Parent engagement and leadership*. Research Report No.134, Saskatoon, Canada: Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching. Available at URL:
http://www.mcdowellfoundation.ca/main_mcdowell/projects/research_rep/134_parent_engagement.pdf
- Smit, F., Driessen, G., Sluiter, R. & Slegers, P. (2007). 'Types of parents and school strategies aimed at the creation of effective partnerships', *International Journal about Parents in Education*, vol. 1, no. 0, pp. 45-52. Available at URL: <http://www.ernape.net/ejournal/index.php/IJPE/article/viewFile/23/13>
- Smith, J. & Wohlstetter, P. (2009, October). *Parent involvement in urban charter schools: A new paradigm or the status quo?*. Paper presented at the School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District and Community Contexts Conference, Vanderbilt University, Tennessee: USA. Available at URL: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/schoolchoice/conference/papers/Smith%20-Wohlstetter_COMPLETE.pdf
- Weiss, H.B, Lopez, M. E. & Rosenberg, H. (2010, December). *Beyond random acts: Family, school and community engagement as an integral part of education reform*. Paper prepared for the National Policy Forum for Family, School and Community Engagement. Available at URL:
<http://www.nyspir.org/info/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Beyond-Random-Acts-HFRP.pdf>
- Weiss, H. B., Lopez, M. E. & Stark, D. R. (2011, January). *Breaking new ground: Data systems transform family engagement in education*. Harvard Family Research Project, Issue Brief. Available at URL:
http://www.pta.org/Breaking_New_Ground.pdf
- Westmoreland, H., Rosenberg, H., Lopez, E. & Weiss, H. (2009, July). *Seeing is believing: Promising practices for how school districts promote family engagement*, Harvard Family Research Project and National PTA, Issue Brief. Available at URL:
www.hfrp.org/content/download/3420/98238/.../SeeingIsBelieving.pdf
- Williams, B., Williams, J. & Ullman, A. (2002). *Parental involvement in education*. DfES Research Report 332. Norwich, UK: Queens Printer. Available at URL:
<http://education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR332.pdf>