

A Parent's Role in their Child's Education

Parental encouragement and support for learning activities at home combined with parental involvement in schooling is critical to children's education. A growing body of research shows that building effective partnerships between parents, families and schools to support children's learning leads to improved learning outcomes. Parents are the first and continuing educators of their children. Research also shows that teacher quality, including standards and training in parental engagement, is important for facilitating effective parental engagement.

The importance of productive partnerships between students, parents, carers, families, schools and the broader community in maximising student engagement and achievement was recognised by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008.

Considered broadly, parental engagement consists of partnerships between families, schools and communities, raising parental awareness of the benefits of engaging in their children's education, and providing them with the skills to do so.

As Muller (2009) states: 'Family-school and community partnerships are re-defining the boundaries and functions of education.'

They enlarge parental and community capacity; they create conditions in which children learn more effectively. In these ways they take education beyond the school gates'.

Research has shown that parental engagement (of various kinds) has a positive impact on many indicators of student achievement, including:

- Higher grades and test scores
- Enrolment in higher level programs and advanced classes
- Lower drop-out rates
- Higher graduation rates
- A greater likelihood of commencing tertiary education.

Beyond educational achievement, parental engagement is associated with various indicators of student development. These include:

- Better social skills
- Improved behaviour
- Better adaptation to school
- Increased social capital
- A greater sense of personal competence and efficacy for learning
- Greater engagement in school work
- A stronger belief in the importance of education.