



Supporting Your Children in School – A Teamwork Approach

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Learning Objectives

- Understand Parent Engagement
- Explain Why Parent Engagement is Important
- Identify the Benefits of Parent Engagement
- Apply Effective Communication Techniques to Communicate with Your Child's School
- Explain the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Parent Engagement
- Identify Ways to Improve Engagement in Your Child's Education



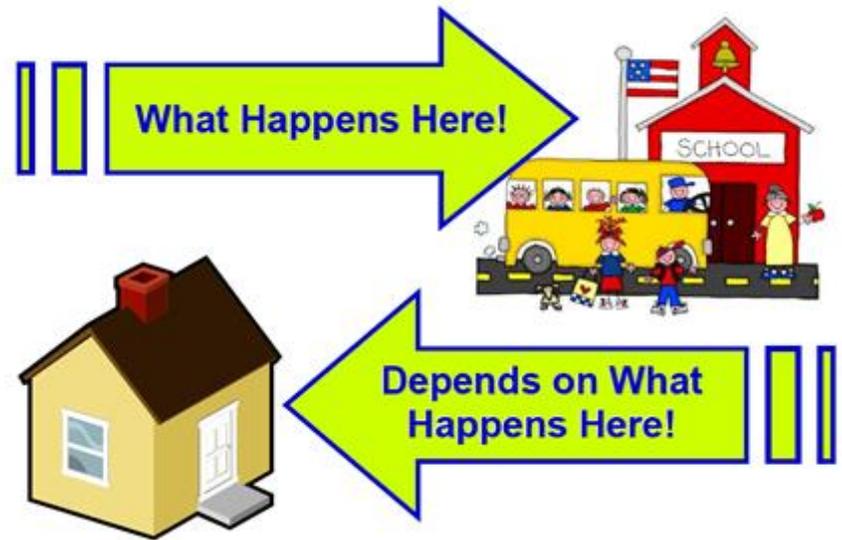
What is parent engagement?

- Parent Engagement is an important, ongoing process that involves active participation, communication, and teamwork between parents, schools, and communities with the goal of educating the student to ensure success as measured by successful completion of high school.



Why is parent engagement important?

- Parent engagement is important. Research has shown that parent engagement increases student success in school.
- It also strengthens school-parent communication by encouraging teamwork between the school and the parent to achieve a common goal.
- Parent engagement motivates students to work hard if they know that both the school and parents are in constant communication about their progress.



Research says...

- Students in special populations have different challenges to overcome in order to achieve academic success and graduate high school.
- Special populations include: students in special education, students who are overaged for their grade level, students who have excessive absences from school, students who have math/English language proficiency, English language learners, CFSA/DYRS involved, and students with an excessive number of course failures
- Even still... school related factors only account for 40% of the discrepancy in graduation outcomes



Source: DC Graduation Pathways Project Summary 2014



Benefits of Parent Engagement

There are many benefits of parent engagement, including:

- **Increased Student Achievement:** Regardless of income, ethnic/racial background or the parents' education level, research has shown that parent engagement increases student success in school.
- **Higher Test Scores/Better Homework Completion:** Research also shows that parent engagement improves attendance, and ensures that homework is completed more frequently.
- **Higher Graduation Rates:** Students graduate at higher rates and are more likely to enroll in post-secondary education when their parents are engaged in their education.
- **Higher Expectations of Students:** Engaged parents have higher expectations for students and school professionals.
- **Positive Behavior:** Students of parents who're engaged are like less to use alcohol, drugs, or engage in violence.



Parent Engagement Framework

- In April 2014, the U.S. Department of Education released a new Parent and Community Engagement Framework: **The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships.**
- The purpose of this model is to create a way for families and communities to engage (FCE). This model highlights the importance of parents working as partners with schools to achieve academic success.



Figure 2: The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships



<http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement>



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Dual Capacity Framework: Families can Play Multiple Roles

Families, regardless of their race/ethnicity, educational background, gender, disability or income, are prepared to engage in teamwork with schools, and can take on other roles such as:

1. Supporters of their children's learning and development;
2. Encouraging your children can help students create a positive self image and a "can-do" spirit in children;
3. Monitors of their children's time, behavior, and resources;
4. Model a passion for education and learning;
5. Advocates/Activists for better learning opportunities for their children and at their schools;
6. Decision-makers/choosers of educational options for their children, the school, and community;
7. Collaborators with school staff and members of the community on issues of school improvement.



Test Your Knowledge

1. Why is parent engagement important?
2. How can parents improve engagement and involvement in their child's education?
3. Parent engagement can lead to increased student achievement and higher graduation rates? TRUE or FALSE
4. Based on the Dual Capacity framework, what are two roles that families can play in their children's education?



Effective Communication Skills

- Successful engagement with your child's school and in their education requires good communication skills. The way you talk to others has a direct effect on how they interact with you.
- Effective Communication involves:
 - ✓ Active Listening
 - ✓ Expression
 - ✓ Body Language and Non-Verbal communication
 - ✓ Managing Emotions
 - ✓ Positive Dialogue



Effective Communication cont.

- Active Listening is the highest form of respect. It involves nonverbal and verbal communication.
 - Different than *hearing* because good listening requires mental and emotional work.
- **Nonverbal**
 - Full physical attention to the speaker (eye contact, head nodding).
 - Understanding the speaker's non-verbal messages.
- **Verbal**
 - Paying attention to the words and feelings that are being spoken.
 - Using thoughtful listening tools such as reflecting, summarizing, and questioning to increase your understanding.



Effective Communication cont.

How you say it: Intonation, Inflection, Volume, Speed, and Vocabulary = _____%

Non Verbal: Appearance, Posture, Gestures, Clothing, Surroundings = _____%

Verbal = _____%

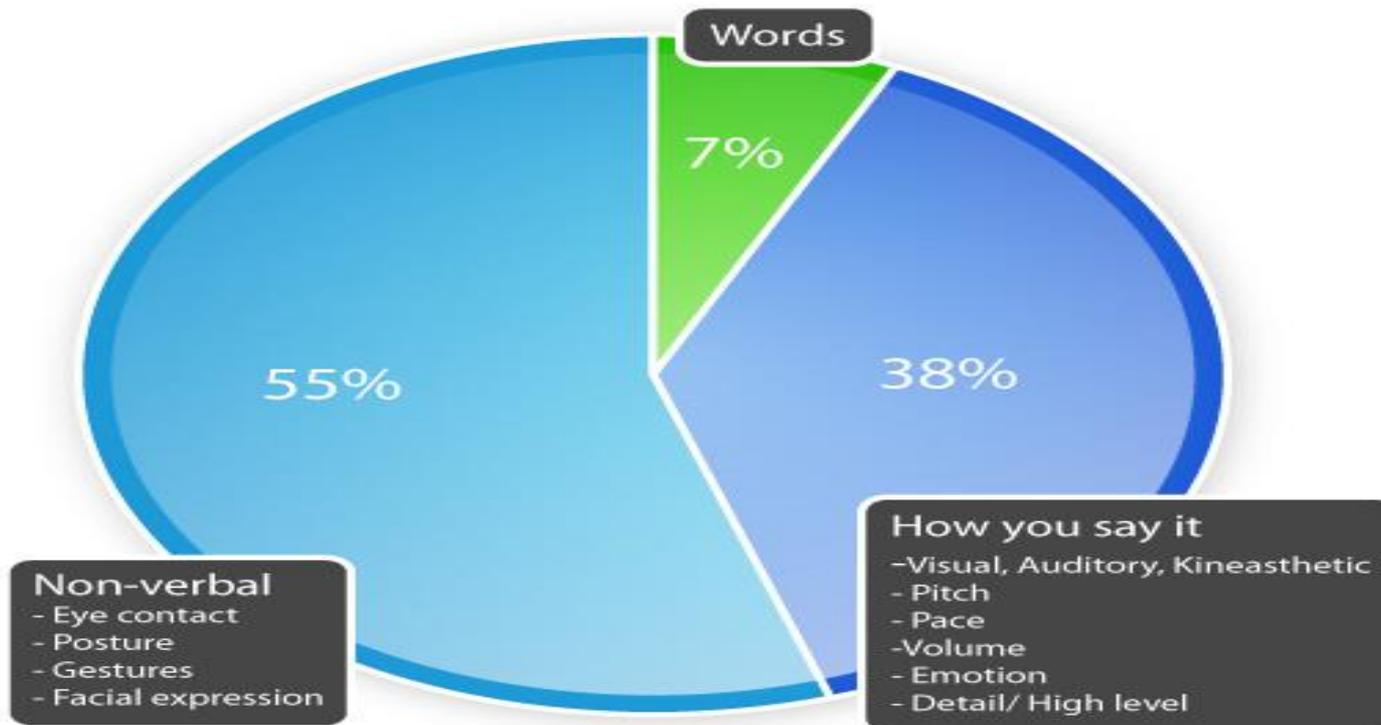
Take a guess!

38% 55% 7%

Source: "Listening to People," *Harvard Business Review*



93% of what people take from our conversation is not what we say but how we say it and our body language.



Source: Think...Training and Development (www.thinktd.co.uk)



Parent Engagement: Tips for Parents

- Read with your child regularly. Encourage them to read. Visit the local libraries together.
- Let your children know that homework is important and it is their responsibility. Make sure they do it and provide them with support.
- Volunteer at your child's school and at school events when you have spare time.
- Get to know your child's principal and teachers. Attend school functions and parent-teacher conferences.
- Discuss safety issues with your child. Help make sure there aren't barriers to learning. If there are any concerns, bring them to the attention of the school administrators immediately.
- Review your child's progress reports and report cards.



Parent Engagement: Tips for Parents

- Read every document that is sent home concerning your child, including field trip forms, report cards, homework assignments and bus schedules.
- Communicate often with your child's teachers about your child's progress.
- Ensure consistency in your involvement. Remember, actions speak louder than words.
- Model lifelong learning behaviors. Read books together. Discuss ideas and current events. Work on school projects at home.
- Advocate for what you believe your child needs to be a successful student.



Parent Engagement: Tips for Parents

- Monitor your child's progress frequently.
- Participate in decision-making involving your child.
- Collaborate with your child's school on how to improve your child's performance and ensure success in academics and behavior. For example, suggest strategies or interventions that may be effective.
- Join or start a parent organization at your child's school.
- Ask questions if there's something you do not understand! Ask for copies of school policies.



Preparing for a Parent-Teacher Conference

Attending parent-teacher conferences are important to staying engaged in your child's education.

Below are some examples of questions to ask at a parent-teacher conference.

- Is my child performing at grade level?
- What are my child's strengths and needs in the core subject areas?
- How much time should my child spend on homework?
- How well does my child perform on tests and quizzes? Will my child benefit from testing accommodations?
- Are my child's assignments submitted on time and completed correctly?
- Does the school have special programs to meet my child's needs?
- Is the current classroom setting suitable for my child?
- Do you keep a folder of my child's work? If yes, could you review it with me?
- What can I do at home to support classroom learning?
- What is the best way to keep in touch with you?



Supporting Your Child at Home

- There are various ways in which parents can improve their child's academic success by laying the right foundation at home.
- Set up a regular time and a quiet place for your child to complete their home work. Try to place it away from TVs, radios, or other loud noise.
- Make sure that your child has all of the materials needed to work. Have an area where materials are stored and put them in charge of getting the materials they need. (E.g., pencils, erasers, calculator, paper, books, and highlighters). This will help build necessary skills for your child to attend school with the right materials.
- Make sure that your child has a planner or a calendar to fill in all homework by the date that it is due.
- If your child is having trouble with homework, talk to each teacher about the homework and ask for modifications. Ask about tutoring or extra help available at school.
- Create a homework folder to help your child keep their homework neat and organized.



Supporting Your Child at Home

- Review your child's planner and discuss any teacher comments on homework assignments.
- If you have an older child, teach them how to ask their teacher for missing assignments when they miss school.
- Encourage your child to complete their work neatly.
- Talk to teachers or school staff when you have questions or concerns.



Test Your Knowledge

1. **Effective Communication involves verbal and non-verbal communication. TRUE or FALSE**
2. **What are two questions that can be asked by a parent at a Parent-Teacher Conference?**
3. **How can you support your child at home?**
4. **What are some tips to become a more engaged parent?**



Resources

“Collaborating for Success: Parent Engagement Toolkit.” (2011) Michigan Department of Education.

Henderson, A. T., and Berla, N., “A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement,” 1994, Washington, D.C., National Committee for Citizens in Education.; National Parent Teacher Association, “The Heart of the PTA: Parent and Family Involvement, 1993, Chicago.

U.S. Department of Education, “Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.” (2010)
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/faq/supporting-family.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education. Family and Community Engagement Framework. (April 2014)
<http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement>.



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