

Parent Involvement = Student Success

Parent involvement is crucial to a child's success in school. Parents influence everything from their child's reading level to their test scores. In fact, 66 different studies came to one conclusion based on the evidence: families matter.* Whether changing TV viewing habits, providing diverse readings materials around the house or volunteering at school, parents can help their children succeed as students.

SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT

"Whether their student acts like it or not, the opinions and thoughts the student has is directly related to what the parents think. **If school is not important to the parent, it will not be important to the child.** The student will think ... 'If mom and dad don't think it's important, maybe it's not.' But I think the parent's opinion is very important regarding values, morals and goals. So support your student because what parents think really does matter to the student. In the long run, what the parents say to the student is important."

— **Dottie Miller**, Parent Coordinator, Twenty-first Century Scholars Southeastern Indiana Regional Support Program



Dottie Miller

GET INVOLVED AT SCHOOL

Your child's teacher or school has several ways to keep in touch with you. One way is the grade report the teacher or school sends home each grading period. If you see any significant changes in your child's grades between grading periods, contact their teacher for a conference. Another way is by sending home graded papers to let you know how your child is doing on class work. The teacher can also send notes to you and call you after school hours. Increasingly teachers use e-mail to communicate with parents. You can also visit your child's school as a volunteer, during parent-teacher conferences or as a visitor.

By visiting school you can discover:

- How your child is doing on class work.
- How he or she interacts with other children.
- If the teacher is having any problems with discipline.
- What you can do at home to help your child in school.

If your child is having problems at home that you think might affect school work, make an appointment with the teacher and the school's guidance counselor to make them aware of the problem.

BE SUPPORTIVE OF SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

Your attitude about school will affect your child's attitude. Try to speak positively about your child's teachers and counselors and the benefits of education. Some other steps you can take to show support for your child's education are:

- Make sure your child goes to school on time every day.

INFOSERIES IS-44

Additional resources

The following free publications will provide additional help. Order them by calling **1-800-992-2076** or view them on the ICPAC Web site at **icpac.indiana.edu**.

- **IS-08:** *The Academic Honors Diploma*
- **IS-40:** *ISTEP+ High School Graduation Qualifying Exam*
- **IS-51:** *Working in High School*
- **IS-68:** *Precollege Summer Programs*

Indiana Core 40 Booklet

Study Skills Booklet



Indiana Career
and Postsecondary
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Take charge
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Hotline: 1.800.992.2076 • Web site: icpac.indiana.edu

*Henderson, Anne T. and Berla, Nancy. *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*. National Committee for Citizens in Education. Washington, D.C. 1994.

- Attend open houses and parent-teacher conferences.
- Answer notes and telephone calls from your child's teacher.
- Volunteer at school as a classroom assistant or help with an activity.
- Join a parent-teacher organization.

BE SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR CHILD

If your child reports a problem with a teacher, you should talk over the concern with your child first and try to understand what is happening from his or her point of view.

Next, you should make an appointment to talk with the teacher. Before you go to the appointment, make a list of the problems. Go over the list with the teacher and try to see the problems from the teacher's point of view. Then try to find a solution that will work for both the teacher and your child.

If further action is needed, you can:

- Talk with the principal and/or guidance counselor.
- Ask to see your child's file.
- Ask for a different teacher.

HELP YOUR CHILD CHOOSE CLASSES

Make sure the school places your child in the class that fits his or her ability.

If your child is placed in an advanced class or a remedial class, you should know the reasons for the decision.

Your child may qualify for an advanced class that will have higher standards but could be more stressful.

Your child may need a remedial class but this may affect the classes he or she can take later.

When your student has a choice of classes, you should be aware of those choices and help make the decision. You can call the school to find out when scheduling is taking place. If your child is having trouble with either math or English, you should talk with the counselor to find out if a tutor or a remedial class will help prepare him or her for advanced classes.

At the end of 8th grade, your child will choose high school classes called Indiana Core 40. If you are unfamiliar with the program, you can call the ICPAC Hotline at **1-800-992-2076** and ask for the *Indiana Core 40 Booklet*. Go over this material with your child and the middle or high school counselor.

Starting in 9th grade, your child will have a wider range of courses to take. Indiana recommends that all students take Core 40 classes and complete Core 40 requirements in order to be successful after high school. Core 40 gives them a good foundation for going into the workforce, prepares them for the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) and for taking college classes. Stay in touch with the guidance counselor in order to make sure your child is meeting all of the Core 40 requirements.

GET INVOLVED AT HOME

Children who feel close to their parents and teachers are generally good students. Young people need to know they can rely on and confide in their parents and teachers. At home you can take several steps to let your child know you are interested in and concerned about his or her life.

- Listen to your child.
- Know your child's friends. If they care

Questions to ask during a parent-teacher conference:

How can we help to challenge my child at home?

Do the students understand how they are to be graded?

Do the students have time to work in class on assignments?

Does my child ...

- ask for help in class or outside of class?
- appear to be paying attention?
- participate in class activities?
- turn in work on time?
- follow directions?
- have the ability to do more advanced work?
- need extra tutoring?

about school, your child is more likely to care too. If possible, know the friends' parents.

- Celebrate your child's successes. Everyone has strengths, so help your child focus on the things he or she can do well.
- Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities. Clubs and sports help teach time management, self-discipline and teamwork.
- Don't allow your child to work more than 10 hours per week. Some work can benefit your child academically, but studies show that grades go down if students work more than 10 hours per week.
- Spend time together outside the home.

Television use

Studies show that grades go down if students watch more than 10 hours of television a week. Watch television with your children and talk about the programs they like.

Homework

When students work at home they get extra practice on skills and concepts and they also have more time for in-depth learning. Here are tips for helping with homework:

- Schedule the same time for homework each day.
- Use lots of praise; display good work on the refrigerator, a bulletin board or in a special folder.
- Never use homework as punishment.
- Be a role model for getting work done before play.
- Do not do your child's homework.

ENCOURAGE READING

Studies show that children who read at home perform better in school. Keep books, magazines and newspapers in the house. Take your children to the library and help them get library cards. Discuss what your child reads. Younger children may benefit from reading to you.

ENCOURAGE WRITING

Encourage your child to write notes to grandparents and other relatives. Keeping a journal helps develop writing skills. Many children enjoy writing and publishing their work using a home computer.

USE THE SUMMER

Your child can continue to learn during the summer months in different and fun settings. Many summer classes are available in electronics, engineering, language, music and more. Summer camps also offer an opportunity to have fun while learning new skills.

Many colleges offer summer programs that give students a chance to live on a college campus and get a firsthand glimpse of what college will be like. These programs may allow students to take some courses for credit, explore career interests, improve study skills and sample college life. Call the ICPAC Hotline at **1-800-992-2076** and ask for a copy of **IS-68: Precollege Summer Programs** or visit the Web site at **icpac.indiana.edu**.

Take your child to the library. Use the Internet to find information on hobbies. Take your child to work with you. You might also encourage your child to go to work with someone else in a career he or she is interested in exploring.

USE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Many resources are available in your community to help your child succeed in school.

- Workshops and support groups help you get involved with your child.
- Libraries offer tutors and study aids.
- Libraries offer computers to search the Internet and offer classes to teach you how to use the Internet.
- Churches offer problem-solving workshops.
- ICPAC offers a *Study Skills Booklet* with tips on improving study habits, taking tests and listening skills.

Other community organizations provide opportunities for children and other family members to engage in social and learning experiences. Some family-oriented community resources include:

- Health care services.
- Housing assistance.
- Adult education.
- Family literacy.
- Employment counseling.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS FOR PARENTS

Here are some additional ways you can become an active participant in your child's success at school (from *Critical Issue: Supporting Ways Parents and Families Can Become Involved in Schools**).

- Read to your young child.
- Provide a variety of reading materials in the home and frequently take your child to the library.

- Provide a quiet place for your child to do homework; help with or check homework every night.
- Remain aware of the importance of parent involvement at the secondary school level and continue to stay involved.
- Volunteer to participate in school activities.
- Participate in school-improvement efforts and join advisory or decision-making committees.

RESOURCES

- *Bringing out the Best in Your Child: 80 Ways to focus on Every Kid's Strengths.* (1997). Tobias, C. U. & Funk, C. Servant Publications.
- *Ending the Homework Hassle: Understanding, Preventing, and Solving School Performance Problems.* (1990). Rosemond, J. Andrew McMeel Publishing.
- *10 Minutes a Day to Reading Success.* (1998). Fairweather, G. (Editor). Houghton Mifflin Publishing.

Sources

**Critical Issue: Supporting Ways Parents and Families Can Become Involved in Schools.* North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (5/02).

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa100.htm>.

Parent Involvement. Education Week on the Web. (5/02).

<http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/issuespage.cfm?id=12>.