This document provides brief summaries of parent involvement research. Complete reference citations are included for more information.

1. **Family background is a stronger predictor of academic success than are school or teacher characteristics.**


2. **An international study of eighth-grade math and science achievement in schools found that in the United States 64% of the differences in achievement were attributable to “home” variables and 40% to “school” variables.**


3. **The University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research found that for every extra hour of reading done each week, test scores rose by 0.5 points while for every additional 5 hours of watching TV, test scores were 0.5 point lower.**


4. **An international study found that parental support for academic achievement was one of the most prominent and consistent factors leading to higher achievement for students.**

5. The University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research found that of the three learning activities—reading, studying and television—only reading was linked to achievement.


6. Children who spent time reading for pleasure did better on tests of cognitive achievement than those who did not read for pleasure.


7. Children who played sports were better problem-solvers and had fewer emotional issues.


8. The University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research found that the amount of time children spend at home eating, sleeping and reading is linked to higher achievement and fewer behavioral problems.


9. Children who have more books at home read at a higher level than those with fewer.


10. A study of children and their caregivers found that parents’ expectations for their children’s future success in school and parents’ perceptions of their children’s academic skills were positively correlated with their children’s achievement scores.


11. When fathers are actively involved in their children’s education, there is a positive impact on student achievement.


12. A study of middle school students found that personal messages delivered by individual relationships with parents and teachers enhance students’ sense of being academically capable, which strongly predicts academic success.


13. Research on the long-term effects of parent involvement showed that involvement has powerful effects on high school learning, even through the last year of high school.


14. Parent involvement during high school results in higher grades in English and math, better attendance and behavior, and better preparation for classroom learning.


15. Students at all levels have shown a desire for their families to be more knowledgeable about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting the home-school relationship.


16. Teaching parents how to help their children with math homework can lead to greater family support for math homework, more positive feelings about math homework for parents and children and, ultimately, higher achievement on math assessments.

17. Parent involvement in children’s early schooling and teacher responsiveness to parents are both positively related to children’s social skills and negatively related to problem behaviors in children.


18. Several studies have shown a strong relationship between parents reading to their children, as well as children reading to their parents, and reading achievement.


19. Communication between teachers and parents can mitigate the negative influence of discrepancies in beliefs about students’ academic abilities. Discrepant beliefs are related to decreased parent involvement in school, so improving communication about students’ performance could improve parent involvement in middle school.


20. Research shows that as parent support for autonomy on homework increases, children’s achievement also increases.


21. A study on the effects of parental involvement on homework found that parents become involved when they perceive that their children and teachers want their involvement, and that their involvement will make a difference.


22. Parents’ homework involvement influences student success most by supporting positive attitudes about homework, positive perceptions of personal competence, and self-regulatory skills.

23. Parent involvement influences student outcomes through modeling, reinforcement and instruction.


24. Parents’ confidence in student performance is shown to have a significant positive effect on student achievement.


25. The home environment is a powerful factor in determining school performance, including achievement, interest in learning, and number of years of schooling children will receive.


26. Communication between the home and school is very important, as children are more inclined to perform well when home and school have similar emphases on motivation and learning.


27. Specific invitations for parent involvement by students and teachers are important motivating factors for parents to get involved in their children’s education at home and at school.


28. Supportive social networks and parent self-efficacy to help their children predict greater amounts of parent involvement at home.

29. Children whose parents do not place a strong emphasis on the importance of college have only a one-in-11 chance of attending and graduating from college.


30. Suggesting or recommending children go to college produces more graduates than not mentioning college at all, but insisting on their attendance produces the most graduates.


31. Children whose parents insist that they attend college have almost a one-in-three chance of attending and graduating, and a one-in-eight chance of achieving an advanced degree.


32. High school students think that parent involvement is very important—perhaps more important during high school than at any other time in their lives.

*High School Students Have Parents, Too: A study of the relationship between parents and high school academic achievement in the Fayette County Public Schools*, The Youth News Team of the Kentucky Conference for Community and Justice in partnership with the Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence.

33. Research shows that eating meals together may be the most important family activity to promote student achievement.

*High School Students Have Parents, Too: A study of the relationship between parents and high school academic achievement in the Fayette County Public Schools*, The Youth News Team of the Kentucky Conference for Community and Justice in partnership with the Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence.

34. Shared parent-child book reading during early childhood leads to higher reading achievement in elementary school.

*Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress* synthesizes a large body of research on 14 factors associated with educational achievement disaggregated by race/ethnicity or income level, including parent participation, reading to young children, amount of television viewing, and parent availability. www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICPARSING.pdf.
35. Research shows that the more families support their children’s learning and educational progress, the more their children tend to do well in school and pursue higher education.


36. Families from all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels can have a positive effect on their children’s education by encouraging children, talking to them about school, helping them plan for higher education, and keeping them focused on learning and schoolwork.


37. When parents practice academic socialization with their teens, middle school achievement improves. Academic socializations include discussing education expectations and learning strategies, fostering occupational aspirations, and making plans for the future.


38. Parents who provide frequent verbal support, praising children’s efforts and telling them they love and care about them, tend to have children with higher self-esteem, who consequently do better in school.


39. Home learning activities such as reading aloud and frequent open family discussions are associated with improved student achievement.


40. Research shows that when schools encouraged children to practice reading at home with parents, they made highly significant gains in reading achievement compared with children who practiced only with teachers at school.


41. Findings suggest that self-discipline, rather than IQ, accounts for the difference in final grades, high school selection, school attendance, hours spent doing homework, and the time of day students begin their homework.


42. Reports indicate that, in general, teens feel close to their parents, think highly of them, and even want to spend time with them.


43. Implementing math-related family and community involvement programs can lead to an increase in students’ scoring as proficient on standardized math test.


44. Studies suggest that high achieving students come from families in which parents set high standards for their children’s academic activities and maintain a learning-supportive home environment.

Clark, R., “Homework-focused parenting practices that positively affect student achievement.” In N. F. Chavkin (Ed.), Families and schools in a pluralistic society, (pp.85-105), State University of New York Press.

45. The level of parent involvement appears to be directly linked to the specific methods that schools and teachers use to encourage involvement at school.


46. Although parent education level and income are associated with higher achievement in students, when socioeconomic status is controlled for, only parent attention has a significant impact on student achievement.

47. Parental empowerment, defined in this study as “parental perceptions of the school’s willingness to accommodate parents,” is also consistently correlated with higher achievement.


48. One study found that the differences between middle-class and working-class students’ levels of achievement, aspirations and life prospects may have to do with the way parents respond to teachers’ requests and interact with the school.


49. Research suggests that teachers with high expectations for students in diverse classrooms can help increase student success and minimize the widening of the achievement gap.


50. Although most schools practice the same top five activities to include parents, such as sending student work home, holding conferences with parents, sending letters and notes home, and hosting back-to-school nights, higher achieving schools reported sending home more classroom newsletters, having more active parent-teacher organizations, and better relationships with parents.


51. Parent aspirations for their children’s future education have a positive impact on students’ self-efficacy for academic achievement and motivation to do well in school.


52. Parents with less than a high school education and very low incomes are likely to have low levels of contact with teachers and schools, but such parents are anxious to cooperate with teachers despite difficulties in doing so.

53. Parent involvement during high school results in higher grades in English and mathematics, better attendance and behavior, and better preparation for classroom learning.


54. A stimulating home environment that supports and encourages learning is a greater determinant of school success than is the parents’ socioeconomic level or cultural background.


55. Realistic, reachable parental expectations are associated with high performance on cognitive tasks in students.


56. “Whether construed as home-based behaviors, school-based activities or parent-teacher communication, parental involvement has been positively linked to indicators of student achievement, including teacher ratings of student competence, student grades, and achievement test scores. Involvement has also been associated with other indicators of school success, including lower rates of retention in grade, lower drop-out rates, higher on-time high school graduation rates, and higher rates of participation in advanced courses.”


57. Schools with strong family engagement were four times more likely to improve student reading over time and were 10 times more likely to improve student learning gains in mathematics.

58. Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, said, “It is well-documented—and plain common sense—that parental involvement in a child’s education boosts student learning and improves both behavior and attendance. We know that children with parents who are engaged in their education are less likely to drop out.”


59. Parental involvement during middle school is positively related to achievement when it creates an understanding about the purposes, goals, and meaning of academic performance; communicates expectations about involvement; and provides strategies that students can effectively use.


60. Where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, reading scores grew at a rate 50 percent higher and math test scores 40 percent higher than in schools where teachers reported low levels of outreach. Outreach to parents measured the extent to which teachers communicated with parents through, among other things, sending parents materials on ways to help their child at home.


61. “When parents are simply more involved than average, their children are an astonishing 30% more successful in school … as measured by GPAs; test scores in math, science, reading and social studies; and promotion, retention and teacher ratings.”


62. Researchers on school-family partnerships have reported that schools that help families feel welcome and show them how to improve learning at home are likely to have more support from parents and more motivated students.

63. Of the barriers considered to be centered at the school, more than half of schools (56 percent) perceived that lack of time on the part of school staff created a barrier to parent involvement to a great or moderate extent. About half (48 percent) perceived that lack of staff training in working with parents was also a barrier to parent programs.


64. “Parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving achievement and be designed to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills.”


65. Studies find that students with involved parents are more likely to:
   1. Earn higher grades and test scores.
   2. Pass their classes, earn credits and be promoted.
   3. Attend school regularly.
   4. Have better social skills, show good behavior and adapt well to school, graduate and go on to further education.


66. The research evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school but throughout life. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:
   1. Create a home environment that encourages learning.
   2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.
   3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.