

## **Parent Involvement Increases Student Achievement**

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How can a parent improve your child's achievement in school, help him earn higher grades, and increase her test scores? Get involved with your child's education. Want to decrease your child's absenteeism and improve her behavior? Get involved with your child's education. In a culture that often disrespects schools and teachers, how can you confirm or restore your confidence in your child's education? Yes, you guessed it! Get involved with your child's education.

How much do you need to get involved? What's the right way to get involved? These are legitimate questions raised by parents. You need to know that there is not one right way to get involved with your child's education. You have to find what works best for you, in your unique circumstance. For a household where parents work different shifts and Mom doesn't get home until 2:00 a.m., getting involved with her child's education could mean Mom regularly leaves a note for the child to read when he gets home from school. The simple note could say something like this: "I miss you! Can't wait to hear about what you learned in school today. I learned how to fix your bike! I will tell you how I learned this and we can fix the bike together on my day off Saturday. Love you, Mom."

In the note Mom affirms her love for her son and that she values their time together. Mom also shares how important she thinks learning is by asking about school and with her excitement about her own learning. Notice that Mom plans to share how she learned to fix the bike, which will again demonstrate the value of learning. Mom will get the child actively involved in repairing the bike which provides an opportunity for him to learn about bike repair. As they repair the bike Mom can share how her own learning in school enabled her to acquire the skills to fix the bike. Mom can't always attend family nights or parent-teacher conferences at school due to her work schedule, but she still models the importance of learning and education.

In a different household a Dad might be interested in becoming active in a school's parent group as a means of getting involved in his daughter's education. In the parent group the Dad may discover what reading skills are typically expected for children his daughter's age. He worries because she does not seem interested in reading. With the knowledge gained in the parent group he will then talk with his daughter about setting reading goals that are attainable but appropriately challenging for her. At the parent group Dad also heard about resources teachers need in order to provide skills that children need to thrive in their changing world. Dad and daughter join other parent group members and their children at a school board meeting to advocate for these additions to the curriculum.

The parents described in this article are both involved with their child's education. By monitoring what goes on at school, showing interest in and valuing learning, and supporting their child's engagement in school parents can be involved in ways that ensure that their children have opportunities for success.