



The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**

SUPPORTING PARENT SUCCESS

RESEARCH



Parents are eager to help their children succeed and can do so when communities create conditions — by offering supports, tools and information — that support parent success.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT PARENTS?

PARENTS' NURTURING INTERACTIONS FOSTER THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN'S HEALTHY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- The “serve and return” interactions between parent and baby — in which young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions and gestures, and adults respond to them with the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing — builds and strengthens brain architecture and creates a relationship in which the baby’s experiences are affirmed and new abilities are nurtured. Children who have healthy relationships with their primary caregivers are more likely to develop insights into other people’s feelings, needs and thoughts, which form a foundation for cooperative interactions with others and an emerging conscience. Sensitive and responsive parent-child relationships also are associated with stronger cognitive skills in young children and enhanced social competence and work skills later in schools, which illustrates the connection between social/emotional development and intellectual growth.¹
- “...the development of healthy brain architecture is influenced by consistent ‘serve and return’ interactions between young children and their primary caregivers.”²

PARENTS' REGULAR AND CONSISTENT ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN POSITIVELY AFFECT PRE-LITERACY, LITERACY AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- Family engagement is positively linked to children’s literacy skills in preschool, kindergarten and the early elementary grades, according to a review of 95 research studies primarily from the last decade. “Parents and their children engaged in a host of activities (including shared book reading, dialogic reading, home tutoring

and family conversations), and these activities were related to positive results for children's vocabulary, listening comprehension, rates of word reading, story comprehension and other reading skills."³

- "The studies [reviewed by Van Voorhis et al.] show links between parental engagement in children's literacy and improved vocabulary, listening comprehension, and decoding skills, as well as more advanced reading ability, spelling and comprehension. Home-based literacy practices are also positively associated with social-emotional skills, such as increased motivation to learn, and attention to, and persistence with, difficult tasks."⁴
- How often parents read to their young children at home is related to children's language and literacy development, including vocabulary knowledge, letter knowledge and comprehension.⁵
- Reading as a stand-alone activity will not help children with pre-literacy skills. Children need to be introduced to specific skills while they are being read to in order to develop early literacy skills.⁶ Parent involvement in early literacy is directly connected to academic achievement. Children need parents to be reading role models who offer daily practice in order to develop beginning literacy skills.⁷ Parents should focus on the words on the page while reading with their pre-K reader according, to research.⁸

PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION HELPS FOSTER POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- The importance of strong partnerships between families and early childhood education programs is clearly supported by family engagement literature. Positive connections between families and early education programs are linked to greater academic motivation, grade promotion and social-emotional skills. This holds true for all children, including those from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.⁹
- Parent involvement in children's learning has positive effects on the child's school performance, including higher academic achievement.^{10,11}

- Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.¹²
- Efforts to increase parent-initiated school involvement at key developmental transitions, such as kindergarten transition, will have a positive effect on kindergartners' academic outcomes.¹³

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EARLY GRADES SCHOOLING AFFECTS ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- When schools use effective family engagement practices, students are four times more likely to improve their reading performance.¹⁴
- Parents and family members who are active in their child's education contribute to academic preparation and increased level of achievement.¹⁵
- Parent and community involvement specifically focused on boosting student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. Effective efforts to engage families should encourage them to help their children develop specific knowledge and skills.¹⁶

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004). *Young children develop in an environment of relationships*. Working Paper No. 1. Retrieved from <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2004/04/Young-Children-Develop-in-an-Environment-of-Relationships.pdf>.
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- ³ Van Voorhis, I. F., Maier, M. F., Epstein, J. L., & Lloyd, C. M. (2013). *The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8: A focus on literacy and math achievement outcomes and social-emotional skills*. New York, NY: MRDC. Retrieved from http://www.mdr.org/sites/default/files/The_Impact_of_Family_Involvement_FR.pdf
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- ⁹ See, for example, Christenson, S., & Sheridan, S. M. (Eds.). (2001). *Schools and families: Creating essential connections for learning*. Guilford Press; Mantzicopoulos, P. (2003). Flunking kindergarten after Head Start: An inquiry into the contribution of contextual and individual variables. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *95*(2), 268–278; McWayne, C., Hampton, V., Fantuzzo, J., Cohen, H. L., & Sekino, Y. (2004). A multivariate examination of parent involvement and the social and academic competencies of urban kindergarten children. *Psychology in the Schools*, *41*(3), 363–377.
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