

HELPING YOUR CHILD SUCCEED AT SCHOOL – THE TOP 6 SECRETS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

People for Education recently conducted a wide review of Canadian and international research on parent involvement and student success. There is substantial agreement on the most effective actions parents can take to reduce achievement gaps between students, and increase their chances for academic success.

There are six simple things parents/guardians can do:

1. Let your child know that you think it is important that he or she does well in school.

- ◆ In numerous studies examining parent behavior, researchers have found that having high, but realistic, expectations of children is the most significant contributor to their academic success (Jeynes, 2005).

2. Talk to your kids about school.

- ◆ In a Canadian study, researchers examined everything from how often families ate together to how much television they watched. Talking with children specifically about school was the one common connection between parent involvement and student success (Pelletier & Corter, 2004). This finding is confirmed in numerous other studies.

3. Read to your child when they're young (and even when they're older).

- ◆ Reading to children—in any language—instills in them a sense that their parents think reading is not only important, but enjoyable. Reading to children has been shown to have a positive and long-lasting impact on students' academic success (Redding, S., Langdon, J., Meyer, J., & Shelley, P., 2004).

4. Go to concerts and sports events.

- ◆ Attending events at school is one of the ways that parents can show children that they think school is important. It also builds a general sense of involvement, which, according to Jeynes (2005), may be most beneficial to children's success.

5. Read your child's report card.

- ◆ Monitoring students' progress by doing things like reading report cards carefully and talking to children about report cards has been shown to improve students' chances for success—particularly students in high school (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1985).

6. Go to parent teacher interviews

- ◆ Parent teacher interviews provide an opportunity for the parent to build a bridge between the home and the school. While “at home parenting” has the most significant impact on student achievement, collaborative relationships between teachers and parents also improve students' chances for success (Harris and Goodall, 2007).

These six simple steps can lead to improved attendance, improved student engagement, more positive relationships between parents and teachers, and increased student success overall. The effects of this form of parental involvement has an impact across socio-economic, ethno-cultural and educational lines.