



Part 3: Innovations in Professional Growth

***Public Education and Webcasting in BC:
October 2005 to May 2006***

**Parent Involvement in British Columbia:
Building Community**

November 30, 2005

Resources

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement

A research synthesis authored by Anne T. Henderson & Karen L. Mapp, published by SEDL.

Key Findings about Impact:

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: many forms of family and community involvement influence student achievement at all ages.

- ❖ Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to improved student achievement.
Epstein, Simon & Salinas (1997), Jordan, Snow & Porche (2000), Starkey & Klein (2000)
- ❖ The more families support their children's learning and educational progress, both in quantity and over time, the more children tend to do well in school and continue their education.
Miedel & Reynolds (1999), Sanders & Herting (2000), Marcon (1999)
- ❖ Families of all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels can, and often do, have a positive influence on their children's learning.
Ho Sui-Chu & Willms (1996), Shaver & Walls (1998), Clark (1993)
- ❖ Family and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement.
Invernizzi, Rosemary, Richards & Richards (1997), Dryfoos (2000), Clark (2002)

Key Findings about Making Connections:

When programs and initiatives focus on building respectful and trusting relationships among school staff, families, and community members, they are more effective in creating and sustaining connections that support student achievement.

- ❖ Programs that successfully connect with families and community invite involvement, are welcoming, and address specific parental and community needs.
Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997), Sanders & Harvey (2000). Peria (2000)
- ❖ Parent involvement programs that are effective in engaging diverse families recognize cultural and class differences, address needs and build on strengths.
Scribner, Young & Pedroza (1999), Chrispeels & Rivero (2000), Lopez (2001)
- ❖ Effective connections embrace a philosophy of partnership where power is shared – the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members.
Wang, Oates & Weishew (1997), Smrekar et al (2001). Moore (1998)
- ❖ Organized initiatives to build parent and community leadership aimed at improving low-performing schools are growing and leading to promising results in low-income urban areas and the rural South
Mediratta, Fruchter & Lewis (2002), Jacobs & Hirota (2002), Wilson & Corbett (2000)

A New Wave of Evidence is available as full-text PDF at www.sedl.org/connections/resources.
A summary of each study can be found in the full report.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILDREN DO BETTER IN SCHOOL

Monitor out-of-school activities

Keeping an eye on what your kids do after school can help reduce adolescent sexual activity, drinking, and drug use.

- Know your children's plans, where they go, and what they do. If you work outside the home, set a time to speak with them on the phone every afternoon.
- Use community resources to keep your children safe and busy outside of school. Youth organizations, religious groups, arts and cultural institutions school clubs, colleges and universities, and after school programs all provide safe and wholesome activities.

Set Daily Homework Times

Support your children's efforts to learn. Be available for questions, and spend time discussing what was learned. You don't have to know all the answers – simply demonstrating an interest will make a difference

- Set a regular time for homework each day
- Provide a quiet, well-lit place at home where your kids can study. If you can't do that, then encourage your children to study at the library.
- Don't let kids be distracted by phone calls, radio, and television when they're supposed to be doing their homework.

Establish Family Routines

Parents who create and maintain family routines create a stable home environment. Routines make life predictable and satisfying for all family members.

- Set routine times for homework, chores, meals, and bed.
- Discuss daily events at mealtime and remember to ask your children questions about their day.

Praise Your Children

Children are usually more successful in school when parents praise their skills and efforts, show interest and concern, and reward success.

- Set high, but realistic, standards for your children's schoolwork.
- Encourage your children to work hard to achieve their goals.

Make Sure Your Kids Know that Reading is Important

Reading is the key to success in school and in life. Children who have things to read at home learn to read better and understand more of what they read.

- Keep good books, magazines, and newspapers in your home.
- Go to the library to borrow things for your children to read and to find information to help with their school projects, interests, and hobbies.
- Ask your children questions about what they are reading and what they have learned. Get them to talk about their lessons.

Use TV Wisely

It's okay for kids to watch some TV. But grades drop sharply when kids watch more than 2 hours a day. Recently, 44% of 7th graders reported watching 3 or more hours of TV a day. That's over 21 hours a week your kids could be spending on hobbies or other productive activities.

- Limit the amount of TV viewing.
- Help your children select educational programs.
- Watch what your children watch, and then discuss the program with them.

Use Community Resources

Take advantage of free or low-cost opportunities for your family to participate in fun and educational activities together. After school and summer learning programs, recreation centers and sports teams, community service activities, and religious youth groups all provide positive social and learning experiences for children and their families.

- Reinforce learning by going to libraries, museums, free concerts, and cultural fairs.
- Other family-oriented community resources may include health care services, housing assistance, adult education and family literacy, employment counseling, and arts and culture activities.

Keep in Touch with the School

The first step in helping your children achieve more is staying informed about their progress at school. Don't wait for schools to tell you how your kids are doing. Instead, get to know the people involved in your children's education and speak with them often. When parents and teachers work together as partners, learning becomes easier for the kids.

- Attend parent-teacher conferences at school. Learn the names of your children's teachers, principals, and counselors; talk with them several times a year about how your child is doing. Teachers welcome and need your feedback in order to do the best for your child.
- Check with the teachers to make sure they're giving your children meaningful and challenging homework... and the right amount of it.
- Get involved with the school: set up homework hotlines, volunteer on school committees, or become a mentor. If you're not sure how you can help, ask.

Talk to your Children

Frequent and open family discussions are also important in helping your children do better. So keep the lines of communication open. Give your kids the tools to help them survive high school by teaching them the importance of honesty, hard work, and responsibility.

- Listen. Letting your children express their concerns will help them more effectively resolve their problems.
- Talk about the importance of your values so your children can learn to make good decisions.
- Talk to your children about sex, drugs, and alcohol – you may find it hard, but it may just save their lives.
- Discuss school, school work, and their outside activities.
- Get to know their friends and who they hang out with.
- Keep them involved in family activities.

Source: www.operationgraduation.com



The following list illustrates examples of the materials that can be found on the Achieve BC Website. To access these materials:

1. Go to the Achieve BC website: www.AchieveBC.ca
2. Go to Achieve BC Tools and Resources (right hand bar)
3. Click on **Booklets**
4. Scroll Down to **Education Resources**

Education Resources for Families - Examples

Booklet Name:	Example:
<p>Ready, Set, Learn As your child's first and most important teacher, you play a vital role in preparing your child for school. Starting Kindergarten is an important milestone in life. While many of today's families balance many responsibilities, spending time with your child (playing, snuggling, reading, and talking) will make a big difference. Together with your child, enjoy and learn from the ordinary things in life as you go about your daily routines.</p>	<p>Talking Language development is a cornerstone for being ready to learn in school. Language is the main way that your child will communicate with the world around them, expressing their needs and wishes. Generally, between the ages of three and five your child's vocabulary will almost double to about 1500 words. Typically at age three, a child can use four-to-five-word sentences beginning with words like "I" and "you". Most three-year-olds will begin using "what", "where" and "how" to ask many questions, and will know social words like "hello", "please", and "thank you". The best way to support language development is simply to talk with your child and listen to them. Most preschoolers have the language skills to be part of family and play groups. Take advantage of opportunities that arise in everyday living to have conversations.</p>
<p>Math for Families: Helping Your Child With Math at Home Kindergarten to Grade 1 This booklet provides suggestions for ways families can support math at home. Activities are provided to support each of the areas identified in the assessment "Assessing Early Numeracy".</p>	<p>Math Everywhere: Have Fun with Math</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play games together (including board games and computer games). Talk about what makes games fun, what makes them hard, and which games your child would like to play again; • Look for toys that encourage your child to think creatively (building blocks and constructions toys); • Play card games, board games, or dice games. These games can add to family fun; • Cuddle up and read books together – talk about the ideas related to numbers, space, time and money.
<p>Writing For Families: Kindergarten to Grade 1 Writing is an essential skill that allows children and adults to express themselves, perform daily tasks and communicate ideas at school and in the workplace. Parents and guardians are a child's first and most important teachers. You can help your child learn to write well, and you can show them that writing can be fun.</p>	<p>Forming Sentences: Simple Sentences Beginning writers string unrelated letters together. With time and experience, words and simple sentences take shape. You can help your child with this important transition. Here are suggestions:</p> <p>Encourage your child to 'pretend write' (scribble) notes to you or make up lists of grocery items or things found in different rooms around the house. Help them to think about the letter sounds they hear in the work. Can they write any of the letters they hear?</p> <p>Provide your child with some simple, unfinished sentences so they can fill in the blanks. For example, <i>I can see a _____, or The dog was _____</i>. Children can write a number of these sentences, adding a different word each time to form a simple story.</p>

Education Resources for Families *(continued)*

<p>Booklet Name:</p> <p>Helping Your Child Learn: Grades 8-9 Developed with input from parents and educators, this booklet is designed to provide an overview of learning standards and what you can expect your child to learn at each grade level; set out goals for your child's progress and achievement; and provide tips and advice on how you can help your child learn.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Parents and Families Can Help Success Strategies for Parents to Help Teens Learn Tips for parents and families</p> <p>Get early success Making an extra effort with your teen at the start of the year will provide benefits throughout the months ahead. Do everything you can to help your teen do their best from the start. When your teen starts strong, that early confidence can last all semester.</p> <p>Get to know the school Learn all you can about your teen's school's rules and regulations. Ask for a school handbook. This will answer many questions that come up over the year. Being actively involved requires knowing about school activities and events. Ask if the school has a Web site and check it regularly. If your school doesn't have a handbook, ask questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the behavioural expectations of students in our school (e.g., dress code, attendance and conduct)?• What are the school policies on bullying, drugs, alcohol suspension and expulsion?• Do you charge school fees? For what purpose?• Am I invited to all school functions (e.g., assemblies, sports days, dances)?• What role does the Parent Advisory Council play at this school?• What school committees are parents welcome to be involved in?
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Other Booklets:

Reading for Families: Helping Your Child Learn: Kindergarten to Grade 1

This booklet provides suggestions for ways families can support reading and literacy at home.

Helping Your Child Learn: Kindergarten to Grade 3

Developed with input from parents, teachers and other educators, this booklet provides an overview of what your child can expect to learn at every grade level, setting out goals for your child's progress

Helping Your Child Learn: Grades 4-7

Suggestions for how parents and teachers can work together to help students succeed in the intermediate grades, from Grade 4–7.

Grad Planner: Grades 10-12

This booklet gives you valuable information about graduation requirements, provincial exams and scholarships. To help you plan for life after graduation, there's information about post-secondary institutions, apprenticeship and skills development and how you can pay for your education.

