REL Appalachia Ask A REL Response

Behavior and Mental Health, Family and Community Engagement
January 2020

Question:

Does family engagement or involvement in a child's education support non-academic outcomes (for example, behavior, school engagement, substance abuse, community engagement, family functioning)?

Response:

Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about family engagement or involvement in a child's education. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. Ask A REL provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations in response to questions about available education research.

Following an established REL Appalachia research protocol, we searched for peer-reviewed articles and other research reports on family engagement or involvement. We focused on identifying resources that specifically addressed how family engagement or involvement in a child's education supports non-academic outcomes, such as behavior, school engagement, substance abuse, community engagement, family functioning. The sources included ERIC and other federally funded databases and organizations, research institutions, academic research databases, and general Internet search engines. For more details, please see the methods section at the end of this document.

The research team did not evaluate the quality of the resources provided in this response; we offer them only for your reference. Also, the search included the most commonly used research databases and search engines to produce the references presented here, but the references are not necessarily comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist.
References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance.

References

El Nokali, N. E., Bachman, H. J., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2010). Parent involvement and children's academic and social development in elementary school. *Child Development*, *81*(3), 988–1005. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973328/pdf/nihms248792.pdf

From the abstract: "Data from the NICHD Study of Early Childcare and Youth Development (*N* = 1364) were used to investigate children's trajectories of academic and social development across first, third and fifth grade. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to examine within- and between-child associations among maternal- and teacher-reports of parent involvement and children's standardized achievement scores, social skills, and problem behaviors. Findings suggest that within-child improvements in parent involvement predict declines in problem behaviors and improvements in social skills but do not predict changes in achievement. Between-child analyses demonstrated that children with highly involved parents had enhanced social functioning and fewer behavior problems. Similar patterns of findings emerged for teacher- and parent-reports of parent involvement. Implications for policy and practice are discussed."

Jensen, K. L., & Minke, K. M. (2017). Engaging families at the secondary level: An underused resource for student success. *School Community Journal*, *27*(2), 167–191. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1165629

From the abstract: "Parent engagement in education has been shown to have positive effects on students' academic and social/emotional success. However, much of the research has focused on younger students. Less attention has been given to parent engagement at the secondary level, especially with respect to how parents choose to engage and how adolescents perceive this engagement. This article reviews the literature on parent engagement at the secondary level, focusing on its importance to academic achievement, high school completion rates, and social-emotional functioning. Factors influencing parents' decisions to become engaged are discussed, including parental self-efficacy, role construction, and specific invitations from the child. Parent engagement remains important at the secondary level, though parent behaviors appear to change to match the developmental needs of students. Implications for practice and future research are discussed."

McCormick, M. P., Cappella, E., O'Connor, E. E., & McClowry, S. G. (2014). Parent involvement, emotional support, and behavior problems: An ecological approach. *Elementary School Journal*, *114*(2), 277–300. Abstract retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1015536; full text available at https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/sm6/McCormick_2013_parent_involvement.pdf

From the abstract: "We examined relations between parent involvement and kindergarten students' behavior problems in classrooms with varying levels of teacher emotional support. Multi-informant data were collected on *n* = 255 low-income Black and Hispanic students, and *n* = 60 kindergarten classrooms in the baseline year of an intervention trial. Hierarchical linear models revealed a moderated negative effect between parents' home- school communication and teacher emotional support on student behavior problems in kindergarten, as well as negative associations between school-based involvement and behavior problems. For children in classrooms with less teacher emotional support, greater communication between home and school was related to higher levels of behavior problems. Among children in classrooms with more teacher emotional support, this negative relationship was attenuated. Results illuminate the need to consider parent involvement within the context of classroom practices."

Mo, Y., & Singh, K. (2008). Parents' relationships and involvement: Effects on students' school engagement and performance. *RMLE Online*, *31*(10), 1–11. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ801108

From the abstract: "This study focused on parents' relationships and involvement in their children's lives and the effects on the students' school engagement and school performance. The study used the Wave I data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). The data on seventh and eighth grade students' school and family experiences were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The study examined the effect of parents' relationships and involvement on students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in school and subsequently on school performance. The results confirmed the importance and significance of parents' involvement in middle school students' school engagement and performance. The study has implications for practice and provides empirical support for creating school structures that would foster parents' continued interest and engagement in their children's education."

Shumow, L., Lyutykh, E., & Schmidt, J. A. (2011). Predictors and outcomes of parental involvement with high school students in science. *School Community Journal*, *21*(2), 81–98. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ957128

From the abstract: "Demographic and psychological predictors of parent involvement with their children's science education both at home and at school were examined during high school. Associations between both types of parent involvement and numerous academic outcomes were tested. Data were collected from 244 high school students in 12 different science classrooms using surveys, the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), and school records. Results revealed low overall parent involvement. Demographic characteristics predicted parent involvement at school, but not at home, while student reported interest in science predicted both. Different dimensions of parent involvement affected outcomes differently. Among the most pronounced influences were those that parent involvement at home had with student efficacy, interest in science, and motivational states in science class."

Additional Ask A REL Responses to Consult

Ask A REL Appalachia at SRI International. (2018). *What are successful strategies for family engagement in rural schools?* Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/askarel/aar32.asp

Ask A REL Appalachia at SRI International. (2017). *What does the research say about the cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit of nonacademic supports provided in schools, including services or programs focused on family engagement, health, chronic absenteeism, discipline/behavior, and school climate/culture?* Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/askarel/aar14.asp

Ask A REL Mid-Atlantic at Mathematica. (2018). *What does recent research and/or studies on strategies for family engagement say? We are looking for research/studies on early learning as well as K–12.* Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/askarel_30.asp

Ask A REL Southwest at American Institutes for Research. (2019). *What family engagement strategies have proven successful in other districts and what information is required for successfully implementing these strategies?* Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/ask-a-rel/family-engagement-strategies.aspx

Additional Organizations to Consult

National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement: http://www.nafsce.org/

From the website: "NAFSCE is the first membership association focused solely on advancing family, school, and community engagement (FSCE). Our Mission: Advancing high-impact policies and practices for family, school, and community engagement to promote child development and improve student achievement. Our Vision: A world where family engagement is universally practiced as an essential strategy for improving children's learning and advancing equity."

The National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools: https://www.sedl.org/connections/

From the website: "The Center links people with research-based information and resources that they can use to effectively connect schools, families, and communities. It emphasizes connections that directly impact student achievement in reading and mathematics, as well as connections that contribute to the students' overall success in school and in life. The Center reviewed emerging findings and research to develop an online database, annual conferences and annual reports to help advance procedural knowledge and to link research findings to practice."

U.S. Department of Education: https://www.ed.gov/

From the website: "ED's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access."

- Family and Community Engagement: https://www.ed.gov/parent-and-family-engagement

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- (family OR parent*) AND (involvement OR engagement) AND (school OR education) AND outcome*

- (family OR parent*) AND (involvement OR engagement) AND (school OR education) AND (non-academic OR behavior OR "school engagement" OR "substance abuse" OR "community engagement" OR "family functioning") AND outcome*

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the academic database ProQuest, Google Scholar, and the commercial search engine Google.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

In reviewing resources, Reference Desk researchers consider—among other things—these four factors:

- Date of the publication: Searches cover information available within the last 10 years, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- Reference sources: IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols receive highest priority. Applicable resources must be publicly available online and in English.
- Methodology: The following methodological priorities/considerations guide the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized controlled trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, policy briefs, etc., generally in this order; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected), study duration, etc.; and (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, etc.
- Existing knowledge base: Vetted resources (e.g., peer-reviewed research journals) are the primary focus, but the research base is occasionally slim or nonexistent. In those cases, the best resources available may include, for example, reports, white papers, guides, reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, and organization websites.

Resources included in this document were last accessed on January 7, 2020. URLs, descriptions, and content included here were current at that time.