

Yes, You Should Help Your Child with Their Homework

The Importance of Parental Engagement in Student's Academic Success.



BY: SYDNEY WASHINGTON

Ms. Washington is a graduate student in the Psychology master's program at The University of Texas at Dallas.

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Most people have been led to believe that it is only a teacher's skill and interaction with a student that matter for their child's academic achievement. But what if it's not? Studies show that parents' engagement with their children can be critical to their child's success in school. You may be thinking, "Well, it's not my job to make sure that my child is learning in school." It may seem easier to leave things in the school's hands, but your child's academic achievement is another important aspect of your job. A direct link exists between parents' engagement in their child's school and their child's success. Not only that, but as a parent, you are your child's first "teacher."

What is meant by parental engagement? According to [educational leadership experts](#), parental engagement is defined as being actively involved in a student's learning at home through an extension of activities, such as homework or online learning. Engagement is different from attendance at PTA meetings or volunteering at school events. While those are important factors in making sure that your child feels supported, parental engagement leads to more direct positive effects regarding academic achievement. Parents can engage with their children in many ways, such as the following: (1) creating education-related rules at home, (2) communicating openly with your child's teachers, and (3) talking with your child about their school successes and struggles. Your involvement in your child's academic life makes a difference. Set academic goals together with your child! Reward them when they reach their goals! In fact, among 8th graders in one [study](#), discussing activities and planning programs with their parents had a positive effect on their academic achievement.

Unfortunately, many parents face barriers to engaging with their children in schoolwork. Parental engagement with children's schooling has been linked to parent's socioeconomic status. According to a 2015 [report](#), on average, lower-income parents tend to engage in fewer educationally supportive activities than their higher-income peers. Lack of free time could be a factor, or lack of educational attainment among the parents themselves. One might then suggest enrichment programs for children, such as science or math camps. It's a great idea, but it's usually very poorly executed. Most enrichment programs are overrepresented by middle to upper class children. These programs have many reasons for why they are unattainable for lower-income families: many are half-day programs that are difficult for parents who work full time or the cost of the program is prohibitive. In order to accommodate these issues, programs can be made to be all-day programs and offer more scholarships (Morsy and Rothstein, 2015). A great

example of this is the Head Start program, which provides school readiness services at no cost to children from ages birth through 5 for low-income families.

The question remains, how can families engage in their child's schoolwork when they don't have time? One answer might be more community involvement. In a 2006 [study](#) in urban communities, it was found that lower-income people of color tend to feel more empowered when they work together as a group, rather than individually. The study concluded that parent-community involvement, such as community school meetings or having schoolboard officials and local offices speak directly to parents, can lead to higher academic achievement among children. This was found to be true in San Marcos, Texas, where a social work department at a local university worked with the community and school district to provide support at a nearby alternative high school for actual and potential dropouts. The results were dramatically positive for both the students and the community, with student drop-out rates decreasing over time. The Collective Parent Engagement approach is another proposed method. This approach targets parents' social systems for improving a child's academic achievement. Basically, parents form groups and help improve children's outcomes at school through communication with teachers and faculty. The study found that parents' collective efforts to improve the lives of their children and neighborhood had positive educational outcomes. Such an approach has been shown to boost parental engagement, leading to higher academic achievement. This work clearly suggests the value of working at the community level to improve academic achievement in children from lower-income families. Community work should be viewed as a good starting point. As they say, teamwork makes the dream work!

Overall, it's important that parents stay involved and engaged in their children's schooling. This is not to suggest a hovering approach. You wouldn't want to sit in your child's classes every day (and couldn't!). It's important to engage with children with respect to your own schedule. Greater engagement can be simply achieved by asking and learning about your child's day, doing homework with them (not for them), practicing and reinforcing spelling words for a big spelling test that is coming up, etc. Teachers are important, but reinforcement of material is vitally important in the home setting. In conclusion, yes, you should be helping your child with their homework.

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