

# New survey finds parents need help encouraging their kids in science

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A new survey announced today finds the vast majority (94%) of science teachers wish their students' parents had more opportunities to engage in science with their children. However, more than half (53%) of parents of school-aged children admit that they could use more help to support their child's interest in science. The survey was conducted by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., among a sample of 500 science teachers and 506 parents, including 406 parents of school-aged children.

While science teachers agree (98%) that [parental involvement](#) is important for children's interest in science, the survey shows it to be among the subjects [parents](#) are least comfortable discussing with their kids. In fact, barely half (51%) of parents say they are "very familiar" with what their children are learning in science and only 15% cited it as the subject they feel "most comfortable" discussing with them, compared to 33% for language arts and 28% for math. Approximately seven in 10 parents say they are "very familiar" with what their children are learning in language arts (71%) and math (69%).

"Science education has been identified as a national priority, but science teachers can't do the job on their own. They need the help and support from key stakeholders, especially parents," said Francis Eberle, NSTA executive director. "We know that family involvement is important, and parents need help getting involved with their kids in a subject they may not feel comfortable with themselves. We must continue to find ways to break down the walls of the classroom and encourage learning together

among families."

The future of science education is a growing concern nationwide, with leaders making a concerted effort to move American students from the middle to the top of the pack in science achievement over the next decade. The gap is significant: Only 18% of American high school seniors perform at or above the proficient level in science, according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress figures. International test scores show that US students lag significantly behind their peers in science.

When asked what they think prevents parents from encouraging their children's interest in science, 77% of teachers say parents don't feel comfortable talking about science with their children. Part of the problem may stem from lack of resources and community involvement. Half of [science teachers](#) say parents don't have access to materials (52%) or community resources that encourage their children's interest in science (49%). Parents agree, with nearly four out of five (78%) saying it would encourage their child's interest if they had a place in their community where they could take their children to explore science.

"For 125 years, Boehringer Ingelheim has been committed to improving the lives of patients and their families through the discovery of innovative science," said Jim Baxter, senior vice president of development at Boehringer Ingelheim. "A priority for Boehringer Ingelheim is to further science education and help extend the learning process into the homes and families of students, in hopes of building a strong pipeline of scientists for the next 125 years. Through the Boehringer Ingelheim Science Quest initiative, we hope to encourage a passion for science in children beginning at an early age."

Boehringer Ingelheim and Connecticut United for Research Excellence, Inc., (CURE) recently launched Boehringer Ingelheim Science Quest, a

comprehensive initiative designed to bring hands-on [science education](#) directly to the Connecticut elementary schools that need it most. A centerpiece of the effort is the Boehringer Ingelheim Science Quest mobile laboratory - a high-tech science classroom on wheels - that will visit priority school districts across the state. The program also will include tools and resources to facilitate science instruction in the classroom and encourage family involvement in science together at home.

**More information:** Video tutorials featuring several simple and fun experiments families can do together at home can be found at [www.youtube.com/user/FamilyScienceQuest](http://www.youtube.com/user/FamilyScienceQuest) . More tips for parents on how to get engaged in science with their children can be found at [www.nsta.org/sciencematters](http://www.nsta.org/sciencematters) .

Provided by GolinHarris NY

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