

Parents' effort key to child's educational performance

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A new study by researchers at the University of Leicester and University of Leeds has concluded that parents' efforts towards their child's educational achievement is crucial – playing a more significant role than that of the school or child.

This research by Professor Gianni De Fraja and Tania Oliveira, both in the Economics Department at the University of Leicester and Luisa Zanchi, at the Leeds University Business [School](#), has been published in the latest issue of the MIT based *Review of Economics and Statistics*.

The researchers found that parents' effort is more important for a child's [educational attainment](#) than the school's effort, which in turn is more important than the child's own effort.

The study found that the socio-economic background of a family not only affected the child's educational attainment – it also affected the school's effort.

Researcher Professor De Fraja, who is Head of Economics at the University of Leicester, said: "The main channel through which parental socio-economic background affects achievement is via effort.

"[Parents](#) from a more advantaged environment exert more effort, and this influences positively the educational attainment of their children.

"By the same token, the parents' background also increases the school's

effort, which increases the school achievement. Why schools work harder where parents are from a more privileged background we do not know. It might be because middle class parents are more vocal in demanding that the school works hard."

The findings suggest there is a relationship between children's performance and the effort put in by parents in supporting their education.

Professor De Fraja added: "We found that children work harder whose parents put more effort into their education.

"In general, the efforts exerted by the three groups of agents-parents, school and child - affect one another. On the other hand, the propensity of children to exert effort is not influenced by their social background. Children from better off household do not necessarily try harder than those from less advantaged background.

"Interestingly, there is a trade-off between the number of children and their parents' effort: the number of siblings influences the effort exerted by that child's parents towards that child's education. If a child grows up in a more numerous family, he/she receives less effort from parents."

Professor De Fraja said the results suggest that parents are very important for [educational achievement](#): "In general, what we are saying is that a child whose parents put more effort into his or her education does better at school. Therefore policies that aim at improving parental effort might be effective in strengthening educational attainment. Influencing parental effort is certainly something that is much easier than modifying their social background."

More information: Gianni De Fraja, Tania Oliveira, Luisa Zanchi, "Must Try Harder: Evaluating the Role of Effort in Educational

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