

# Study finds better-performing elementary students receive disproportionate attention from parents

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An Indiana University study found that higher-performing elementary school students received a disproportionate number of resources from their parents, compared to their lower-performing peers.

Lower-performing students received resources geared toward improving their [academic performance](#), said study author Natasha Yurk, a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at IU Bloomington's College of Arts and Sciences. Higher-performing students received greater and more diverse resources, such as shared meals or enrollment in [extracurricular activities](#). Parents of higher performers were also more likely to be involved in school activities and networking opportunities that could improve their child's social standing.

"It's encouraging that lower-performing children are getting the resources they need to improve their [school performance](#). But the high achievers may continue to outpace their peers simply because their parents are investing more frequently and in a more diverse way," Yurk said.

The difference was notable through fifth grade, but faded by the time students reached eighth grade.

Yurk will present her study, "When Children Affect Parents: Children's Academic Performance and Parental Investment," on Monday at the

108th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association.

Her study is unique because it examines the effect of children's academic performance on parents' behavior, rather than the effect of parents' behavior on children. Yurk analyzed a data sample from the National Center for Education Statistics' Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort. The sample consisted of around 12,000 students as they progressed from first to eighth grade.

**More information:** The paper, "When Children Affect Parents: Children's Academic Performance and Parental Investment," will be presented on Monday, Aug. 12, at 10:30 a.m. EDT in New York City at the American Sociological Association's 108th Annual Meeting.

Provided by Indiana University

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