

Parental involvement plays key role in children's academic attainment, research shows

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New research has shown how parental engagement has a positive effect on a child's academic attainment—regardless of age or socioeconomic

status.

The study, conducted by the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter, also highlighted areas of promise for how schools and early years settings can support parents in a way that improves their [children's learning](#).

The work was commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation and supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South West Peninsula (PenCLAHRC).

The report showed that for [school-aged children](#), home-school partnership is hugely important—especially where schools personalize communications about a child's progress and make them accessible, for example, through text messages.

The study also highlighted how family literacy interventions can help to boost younger children's learning, and how summer reading programs can improve school-aged children's learning, particularly among families from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

The researchers made their conclusions by conducting a review of existing international studies on the links between parental [engagement](#) and students' learning, and comparing the findings with survey responses from head teachers in over 180 primary, secondary and early-years provisions across England. They also conducted 20 interviews with school leaders and subject experts to provide further context and explore the survey findings in more detail.

As well as the links between parental involvement and children's learning, the study explored activities delivered in or by schools and early years settings that promote and support parental engagement, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The school-wide survey showed that the majority of the 183 schools involved (72 percent) did not have a written policy in place around engagement applied to all parents/carers, but most respondents (80 percent) did consider parent engagement to be the responsibility of all staff.

Lead author Dr. Nick Axford, PenCLAHRC Associate Professor in Health Services at the University of Plymouth, explained that there was no one thing that schools should do to support parent engagement, but that there were areas showing promise.

"These findings from existing studies and new surveys are interesting, because they highlight the positive link between parental engagement and children's academic attainment," he said. "However, it takes time and planning to nurture and encourage parent support.

Recommendations we would put forward include for schools to build parental engagement into their school improvement plans, and to work hard on establishing good communication with parents. The latter could even involve training and support for teachers on engaging with parents, especially as very little is provided to promote this within teacher training."

Dr. Vashti Berry, PenCLAHRC Senior Research Fellow at the University of Exeter, said:

"We recognize that schools and early years settings are working in a challenging financial climate, and that much more research on how best to support parents is needed. But [school](#) leaders recognize the importance of working with parents, and there are lots of practical suggestions in the Education Endowment Foundation guide that is based on our report, so there is fertile ground for improvement."

Dr. Jenny Lloyd, Senior Lecturer in Public Health at the University of

Exeter, said:

"School staff recognize that engaging parents in children's learning requires the building of supportive and trusting relationships from the foundation stage all the way through to the end of secondary education. Schools need resources, systems and structures to create a continuity of care and education that involves [parents](#)."

The full study, titled "[How can schools support parents' engagement in their children's learning? Evidence from research and practice](#)," is available to view on the EEF website.

The [guidance for schools and early years settings that is based on the report](#) is available to view on the EEF website.

Provided by University of Plymouth

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