

5-2024

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Effects of Parental Involvement in Elementary Students 'Academics

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LS 400-01 Capstone

Semester SP.2024

## **Abstract**

Parental involvement, especially in elementary schools, is a good resource for students to achieve academic success. This research paper aims to educate and understand the effects of Parental involvement on elementary students' academic performance. There is a plethora of resources for parents and teachers of parental involvement in their child's academics. This senior capstone will examine the effects of parental involvement on elementary students' academics through literature reviews and parent and teacher surveys about the effects of their involvement in schools and whether they impact their children's educational achievement. The findings reveal that parent involvement is essential to their children's academic achievement.

## **Introduction and Background**

To begin with, we know that elementary education is critical, and it is the first year we prepare children for later learning. Their brains retain much knowledge and can learn new skills quickly. Because of that, it is crucial that children have parental support and that their parents are involved in their academic success, whether at home or by attending school events it is vital for children. Although it is crucial for students to succeed academically, family backgrounds and other factors affect parents' ability to help their children and be involved in school events. This topic interested me as a future educator in the possible issues or beneficial things I can do to ensure every child can succeed academically. Better communication is needed, which can be a significant reason parents do not take time to be involved academically with their child's studying and learning. We must educate parents and teachers about working together to create a solid and thriving environment. Those teachers who know the importance of parental involvement make it a mission to ensure parents get calls, messages, and updates on their child's progress. My research paper is aimed at parents and teachers who either have children in elementary school or teach at an elementary school. The purpose is to find the effects of parental involvement on elementary students' academics. This can be a stepping stone for parents and teachers to understand that parental involvement can affect a child's academics. Hornby (2000) has combined elements of a number of models to create a framework that elaborates hierarchies of parental contributions and parental needs in order to provide a model for involvement which includes eight types of PI: communication, liaison, education, support, information; collaboration; resource; and, policy. My senior capstone research project will give a good understanding of some of the biggest reasons why many parents do not participate as much as others or at all, like, for example, the issue of parents with a language barrier or not having the

knowledge and confidence to be able to go over homework with their child(Hornby,2011), having work commitments or the need for more resources to help their child succeed academically. Some effects that I have found beneficial when parents are involved in their child's academics are better school engagement, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and a better attitude toward learning. (e.g.,Shaumow & Miller,2001),Stated that they weren't sure what was the relation between parental involvement and achievement. My primary research question is: How does parental involvement affect elementary school students' academics? Secondary or related research questions are:

1. What is parental involvement? What kinds of activities are considered to be parental involvement? Why does parental involvement improve their elementary school student's academics?
2. What does research say about the effects of parental involvement on the academics of elementary school students?
3. How are parents involved in their elementary school students' academics today?
4. According to teachers and parents, how can they get more involved in their students' academics?
5. How could teachers and parents get more involved to improve the academic performance of their elementary school students?

To answer my secondary questions, a literature review was conducted where I read through articles and journals on the California State University of Monterey Bay database. Through that data, I was able to answer the questions regarding the effects of parental

involvement on elementary students' academics. I will review the topics of my literature review that I found essential to my research.

### **Literature Review**

How does parental involvement affect an elementary child's academics? Through background on the topic, the literature review mentioned a lot about different involvement methods in your child's education. We know parental involvement has been enforced in education, especially early education. Since 1996, data has been collected on the effects of parent involvement. What is considered parental involvement? What keeps parents unable to be more involved? It is when you attend teacher-parent conferences and volunteer to help in class during school hours. However, another way to be involved in your child's education can start at home. It is essential to understand that learning begins at home before they attend school. Parents teach them social interactions, behavior control, and educational learning with numbers, ABCs, and more (Faires,2000b).

My literature review found the many positive ways parental involvement can be beneficial in the academic performance of elementary children. All sources agree that parental involvement has become a priority nationwide because of the positive effects on a student's academic performance(Martinez,2015). Parental involvement in school with young children has been found to positively affect academics and children's behavior toward education and learning. In a longitudinal study, Epstein (1991) examined the effect of parental involvement on students' mathematics and reading achievements and found that parental involvement has a positive effect on overall academic achievement. His findings indicated that the earlier a child's parental involvement in education begins, the more benefits a child's behavior and relationship towards

learning will have on their academic performance (Epstein,1991). The following subsequent paragraphs discuss how parental involvement is defined in Epstein's framework—the effects of parental involvement, issues with parental involvement, and barriers to parental involvement.

**Parental Involvement Defined.** Parental involvement involves parents participating in school conferences, attending field trips, and volunteering to help with classroom activities. It is a parent's ongoing participation in a child's education. Through the years, there has been a difference in instilling cultural values that do not align with traditional parental involvement(Bower & Griffin, 2011). Research evidence has defined parental involvement as differential and has different definitions. Home involvement could be helping children with homework and talking to them about their school day. Whereas school-based involvement is quite different, being involved can be helping out at your child's school, being a part of the conversations regarding school activities or groups, and interacting with teachers and staff when taking into consideration the shared beliefs of parental involvement by parents and the mindset they have, especially when they do not feel welcome in the classrooms by the teacher, which builds a barrier between them.

**Epstein's Framework.** came upon the Epstein framework, which Epstein(1991) structured on parental involvement. Epstein(1991) describes the challenges and results of implementing what are believed to be the six forms of involvement. The first is parenting, which occurs anytime a child's family practices and supports. The second is communication between educators, parents, and students, making it practical to work together. Volunteering would be the third type of involvement; this is an excellent way for parents to understand what is happening in class and help the child get excited about succeeding. Learning at home is type 4, which is very beneficial for parents who need help with how to help or feel confident by having ideas and

training on providing support for students at home. The last two are decision-making, type 5, and collaborating with the community, type 6. Type five is decision-making, which occurs when schools include parents in the decision-making process and develop parent leaders and representatives. Moreover, the 6th type collaborates with the community in community services, resources, and the integration of strengthening programs and student learning and development. His framework on parental involvement consists of six methods of ensuring parents can provide the support they need. Annual surveys help families share information and concerns with schools about their children's goals. Other activities include workshops, videotapes, and computerized telephone messages (Epstein et al., 1997).

**Effects of Parental Involvement.** One effect that (PT) Parental involvement has on elementary children is the ability to better their child's behavior. For example, in Wilder's meta-synthesis, nine meta-analyses are analyzed. This influence was consistent throughout the studies, regardless of the definitions and measures used; many children are growing and learning from social interaction and controlling their behavior (Wilder, 2014). Having parents as a part of their education and school can improve their self-esteem and ability to communicate with others. Having active parents in schools will increase academic and attendance rates, decrease the dropout rate, and create positive attitudes toward education for parents and students (Lampkin et al., 2022). It indicated that having a partnership with parents and vice versa parents with teachers closes the gap between school and home. It ensures that clear communication between parents and teachers benefits the child's academic achievements.

**Issues with Parental Involvement.** It is noted that there are some negative issues with parental involvement in schools. Some examples could be as simple as teachers not feeling comfortable having parents help in classrooms because of the distraction it can cause. The



parents are unable to attend conferences or participate in class because of the discouragement in parents being actively involved(Hoyt,2016). Parental pressure to have the child finish an assignment or overreact when trying to help a child and with the teacher asking for more parental involvement while doing more 1:1 homework can stress both parent and child. There is also the chance of the parents being of lower minority, making it challenging to have enough time to go over homework or attend school events.

Barriers to Parental Involvement. Some barriers to parental involvement in a child's academic performance can be language and social class barriers. Lack of confidence may also come from parents believing they must develop sufficient academic competence to help their children(Horby,2011) effectively. Especially when working and looking at the statistics of children where I live or in Monterey County, it is that children of Hispanic or Latino parents are the majority number in elementary schools. In Soledad, CA, 31% of students are English learners, and more than 60% of students are from Hispanic or Latino households. Parents of the lower working class cannot attend or be more involved in their child's education because of the inability to miss work or ensure that they go over their child's assignments after school. In a study examined by (Young,1998), the impact of cultural issues on the trust between Mexican American parents and schools. What they meant by this was that many Mexican or Hispanic parents in the U.S. need to be more involved. Because there is no trust between the parents and the school, it takes work to develop meaningful parental involvement. Age can also be a factor in the barriers built when parents or even teachers believe that as students get older, they do not need their parents to be as lived at all in their academics. The researchers have found a significant trend that the parents of early school-aged children are likely to be more involved in school activity rather than the parents of older children (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Stevenson &

Baker, 1987). Children of all ages benefit from having their parents involved and having their parents volunteer and participate.

As stated previously, some opposing results regarding parental involvement's effects on children. Both Izzo et al. (1999) and Sui-Chu and Williams(1996) argue that parental involvement at home is more effective than having parents involved at school., but Miler(2001) argues otherwise; they believe that parental involvement at school is more effective. Opinions regarding parental involvement in school and at home are mixed. It is mentioned that parents have a stronger bond with their children and are the first to provide problem-solving situations before school, which play an essential role in parental involvement and positively affect academic achievements.

Regarding the methods and procedure, I have collected data through surveys from parents of elementary students and teachers of elementary students regarding their opinions on the effects of parental involvement on elementary students' academics. (See Appendix~A Teacher Survey Interviews) and (See Appendix~B Parent Survey Questions). The results will be discussed in the Results, Findings, and Discussion.

### **Methods and Procedures**

At the beginning of this semester, I wanted my topic to be related to children's academics, specifically elementary students, as I knew it would be beneficial for me to use as a reference as an elementary teacher. Upon meeting with my professor, Mr.Thao, I decided on a topic with his help and guidance on the effects of parental involvement in elementary students' academics. I decided on this topic and began brainstorming my primary and secondary questions. I completed a literature review to better my understanding of the issue regarding parental involvement in

elementary students' academics. I obtained and answered my questions through literature related to my topic while also using data from teachers and parents within my community to obtain information on parental involvement and the effects of parental involvement on elementary students' academics. I got six responses from teachers within the range of Salinas and Soledad, CA. Of the six responses, 5 of them were women and one man. And their jobs were substitute teachers, SDC teachers, and other administrative jobs in schools. I got eight responses from parents with children in elementary school. I sent out a Google form to teachers(See Appendix A~Teacher Interview Questions)and parents(See Appendix B~Parents Survey Questions) of elementary school students. For me to get more responses, I had to rely on people sharing my Google form. I went on Facebook to post the links for both Google forms for teachers and parents to ensure I got various people to answer. The research findings regarding the effects of parental involvement on elementary students' academic performance. The first Google form I sent was for the teachers or individuals working in a classroom with elementary students to share their perspectives on parental involvement. What did they consider parental involvement, and how did they try to be involved in their child's education? For my literature review, I have found many articles related to my topic through Google Scholar or other databases surrounding the following research questions. 1. What is parental involvement? What kinds of activities are considered to be parental involvement? Why does parental involvement improve their elementary school student's academics? Followed by 2)What does research say about the effects of parental involvement on the academics of elementary school students? 3) How are parents involved in their elementary school students' academics today? 4)According to teachers and parents, how can they get more involved in their students' academics? 5)How could teachers and

parents get more involved to improve the academic performance of their elementary school students?

In addition to my method and procedure, surveys on Google Forms were sent out and published on Facebook, asking either parents or teachers of elementary students. Some questions were constructed that would be easy enough to answer. The findings will be reported in the next section, followed by a discussion.

### **Results, Findings, and Discussion**

In this section, a discussion of the findings will be reported. It is important to note that navigating the different data to ensure that the information was related to my topic and beneficial to the research topic will be beneficial to the research topic. It is important to first review the survey questions that will be posed to the parents of elementary school students. The questions were based on the secondary and related research questions. Additional questions were added to the surveys better to understand the parents' views on their school involvement. The following subsequent paragraphs are structured around the secondary or related questions:

1) What is parental involvement? What kinds of activities are considered to be parental involvement? Why does parental involvement improve their elementary school student's academics?

Parental involvement can be defined differently based on the parent and how much attention and time they can give their child. Parents responded that active involvement with the teacher about their child's academics, volunteering on field trips, and other school-related activities is what they consider parental involvement. Parents A and G would also agree that

checking in on their children, supporting them, and asking questions about their day or homework is what they consider parental involvement. They agree that parental involvement has made a difference in their child's academics by creating a positive environment. The children feel supported and confident in their academics and are more likely to stay on task and succeed in their academics. They all agree that Parents feel more encouraged to do better if they see a positive and strong relationship between their parents and teacher, making them feel more supported.

2) What does research say about the effects of parental involvement on the academics of elementary school students?

Research from authors like Martinez, Fairies, and Becher has shown the many positive effects of parental involvement in school activities, at home with homework, or just communicating about school. Having active parents involved in their academics can significantly affect their grades, attendance, and motivation to succeed in their academics. Another significant impact that parental involvement can have is that it helps with the child's behaviors and self-confidence. (Becher,2011) mentions substantial evidence that the parent-child relationship improves the knowledge of child development when there is an increase in parental involvement. Active participation from parents has been shown to improve their social and emotional development, ensuring students' pride and accomplishment. Ensuring that a child feels confident in their accomplishments ensures that parents also feel more comfortable in the education their child is receiving, making it more likely for them to participate more.

3) How are parents involved in their elementary school students' academics today?

According to the data from the parents' perspective, parents try to be involved with schools by creating a relationship with the teachers, communicating, and attending meetings to understand how their child is academically. They all gave the almost same idea that they want to be more supportive and be able to help their child with whatever they need to succeed. Most parents say that they are involved in their child's academics by ensuring that they attend meetings and events in the school. An important tool which parents use in order to stay connected with the teacher and their child's progress is using digital apps to stay informed. Parents C and D say they are involved by staying informed by contacting the teachers, communicating with their children, and offering extra support. They also mentioned they offer a home schedule of reading together every evening and helping with homework (Parent Survey 1 Respondent, personal communication, March 25, 2024).

4) According to teachers and parents, how can they get more involved in their students' academics?

According to parents, they would like to be more involved in all aspects to help strengthen their knowledge of their child's education and needs. They would like to try and communicate more regularly with their child about their day and know how to support the children and their teachers. Parents would like to have a better relationship with their children's teachers to ensure that they can get more involved in their children's academics. Being a part of more school activities, meetings, and other important classroom participation. Parents' positive attitude toward teachers, school, and child education at an elementary school can enhance academics (Jaiswal.S, Chaudhuri R,2017). Teachers can get more involved in their student's academics by establishing clear and open communication between them and parents by sending emails, calls, and letters home to help the parents know how to help their children. (Parent

Survey 1 Respondent, personal communication, March 25,2024).It is also suitable for parents to communicate with teachers about any issues they see with their child where they think the teacher can better assist.

5) How could teachers and parents get more involved to improve the academic performance of their elementary school students?

According to parents, they believe that teachers should provide more opportunities for students to volunteer and participate in class. Most parents would like to help teachers and their children by being informed about upcoming assignments or tests to help prepare their children. Teachers E and F both agree that admin and staff need to be more welcoming and offer resources for teachers to incorporate parental involvement(Teacher A, personal communication, March 25, 2024). That could facilitate parental involvement without making parents feel overstepping, offering parenting workshops, promoting parental discussion groups, and establishing in-school or community activities(Becher,2011). Teachers A, E, and F requested that parents' conferences, training, and offering to assist in the classroom could be examples of parental involvement that can help with children's academic success (Teacher A, personal communication, March 25, 2024).

The next section of the survey will focus on the teacher's question(See Appendix A~Survey for Teachers). Some insights I got from reading the surveys by the eight teachers or those in the educational positions was that they also face challenges in increasing parental involvement in a child's education. Many teachers agree that they need more resources and communication with the parents. School administrators need to ensure different methods of communication to mediate teachers' partnership(Ates,2021). They wrote down ways their school

tries to include parents, like conferences, parent meetings, or online. Teachers believe that communicating with parents can be an excellent way to help and build positive ways of helping their children succeed. Ensuring clear and open communication on upcoming events or simply sending out updates about the student's progress can be beneficial for parents to also do their part in helping with the material. They mainly communicated that children excel by having their parents support and encourage them academically. They communicated that when parents are involved, they actively increase student engagement and motivation.

Many of the issues or limitations on ensuring more parental involvement comes from parents believing it takes a lot of planning and time to be a part of their child's academic success—the number of parents who need more confidence or skills to help their children (Faires et al., 2000b). On the contrary, parents have more of a role in the child's early education and their behavior toward learning.

### **Problems and limitations**

Data collection revealed some issues with quality responses, as the majority answered with short answers. I initially made my surveys for a certain number of people, but I had to open them to the public as their answers needed to provide more data for my project. It was also challenging to find more recent data that was relevant to the area I live in. I kept reviewing articles from China, Cuba, etc., or the articles needed to be updated by at least ten years. Some other issues I encountered were figuring out where to start and what I wanted to focus on through the research of this project.



## Recommendations

One of the recommendations I have chosen regarding the feedback I got from elementary students and teachers is to create a better support system in the school system and ensure that both teachers and parents are taught about the effectiveness of parental involvement. And have the proper tools to ensure communication from teachers to parents. Furthermore, the right tools and support are needed to navigate the school's communication apps. It would also be beneficial for parents to have online videos sent to them about how to navigate apps that could help with the proper knowledge to connect with a teacher and see their child's progress. Another recommendation many parents have suggested would help them be more involved in their child's academics is being aware of the upcoming events in class, like tests, quizzes, or other academically related events where they can help the teachers and their child by preparing them. Some teacher recommendations that have been brought to my attention are that they also need more support from the school administration to create more parent-involved activities. Being more welcoming to parents is a problem with teachers; they feel like the admin and other staff also need to try to include parents and have a better relationship and communication. They would like to create better communication with parents and encourage them to make time to work with their children on homework. Having supporting workshops for parents in workshops helps them become more aware, knowledgeable, and capable about the educational system. It is indicated by a large percentage of teachers being the main influences of parents being involved (Ates,2021). School administrators and teachers must use different communication methods to mediate the development of a parent-teacher partnership that can help children succeed (Ates,2021).

## **Conclusion**

This senior capstone research project examines the question, "How does parental involvement affect elementary school student academics? Through the use of a literature review, interviews with six teachers, and eight responses from Google surveys on Google Forms. The findings from extensive research from the literature review and data from interviews with teachers and parents' surveys revealed a positive relationship between academic achievements and parental involvement. Through research and based on the research questions, Parental involvement enhances students' behavior, academics, and confidence in a child's academic success.

Parental involvement is incredibly effective and can improve their academic success and behavior towards school and learning. Through this research, there are plenty of opportunities to help children succeed. Parents and teachers need to work together and communicate effectively on the best ways to work alongside each other to ensure that children have a better chance of succeeding academically. It is clear that the effects of parental involvement are significantly positive and can benefit the students, teachers, and parents in teaching them about the methods of involvement in the child's academics.

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## Appendix 1

### Teacher Interview Questions

- 1) What is your understanding of what parental involvement is considered?
  
- 2) How are parents involved in their elementary school students' academics in school today?
  
- 3) According to you as a teacher, how can you get more involved in their students' academics?
  
- 5) How do you encourage parental involvement? Do you have any specific ideas on how to ensure more involvement?

## Appendix 2

### Parents Survey Questions

- 1) What do you consider to be parental involvement?
  
- 2) How would you like to be involved with your child's education?
  
- 3) How do you try to be involved in your elementary child's education?
  
- 5) Have you noticed a difference in your child's behavior when you have been involved in your child's academics?
  
- 6) How do you think teachers can provide more help on being more involved in your child's academics?