



School, Family, and Community Partnerships

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Benefits from Greater Overlap

“Our survey of teachers, principals, parents, and students show that:

- Teachers control the flow of information to parents. By limiting or reducing communications and collaborative activities, teachers, reinforce the boundaries that separate the two institutions. By increasing communications, teachers acknowledge and build connections between institutions to focus on the common concerns of teachers and parents: a child who is also a student.
- Parents do not report deep conflict or incompatibility between schools and families. Rather, parents of children at all grade levels respond favorably to teachers’ practices that stress the cooperation and overlap of schools and families. Frequent use by teachers of parent involvement leads parents to report that they receive more ideas about how to help their children at home and that they know more about the instructional programs that they did in the previous year.
- Teachers who include the family in the children’s education are recognized by parents for their efforts. They are rated higher by parents than are other teachers on interpersonal and teaching skills, and they are rated higher in overall teaching ability by their principals.
- Students’ test scores suggest that schools are more effective when families and schools work together with the student on basic skills. Students whose teachers use frequent practices of parent involvement gain more than other students in reading skills from fall to spring. And fifth-grade students recognize and benefit from cooperation between their teachers and parents.”

“The results of our research show that although teaching practice reflects all three of the major theoretical positions, parents, students, and teachers benefit most from practices that increase the overlap in school and family spheres of influence all along the developmental time line.”

“Schools and families vary on the dimensions that are supposed to distinguish family and school treatments and attention to children. There are family-like schools and school-like families, as well as schools and families that are distinct in their approaches to education and socialization. Some have suggested that schools and families have different goals for their children (Lightfoot, 1978), but our research suggests that although parents’ educational backgrounds differ, both more-*and* less-educated parents have similar goals to those of the school for their children’s education (Epstein 1986).”

“The main differences among parents are their knowledge of how to help their children at home, their belief that teachers want them to assist their children at home, and the degree of information and guidance from their children’s teachers in how to help their children at home. These factors create more or less school-like families.”

“The main differences among teachers are their ability to put principles of child and adolescent development and organizational effectiveness into practice instruction and classroom management, their ability to communicate with parents as partners in the children’s education. These factors create more or less family-like schools.”

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