

Parental engagement

Parents have the first and most significant influence on their child's learning. It is well known that children with interested, involved and engaged parents do better at school. The research is clear, parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home rather than supporting activities in the school. It is their support of learning within the home environment that makes the maximum difference to student achievement.

You can, however, make a valuable contribution to the school itself, by joining the parent club, nominating for the governing council or helping with school and classroom activities such as listening to reading, LAP program, school social and fundraising events, canteen, camps, excursions and working bees.

If at any time, you are concerned about how your child is fitting in, how secure and content they feel at school, about bullying or their academic progress and how it compares to other students of the same age, make a time to meet their teacher or principal, as they will be in the best position to help.

Useful resources

<http://www.familyschool.org.au/>

<http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf>

<http://smarterschools.gov.au/ParentalEngagement/Documents/Strengtheningstudentlearningresource.pdf>

<http://www.partners4learning.edu.au/>

http://www.pta.org/family_school_partnerships.asp

South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC)

- promotes and develops the interest of parents in the education and general wellbeing of children at preschool and school
- develops and maintains contact with parent groups throughout the state
- acts as an advocate for parents on educational matters
- supports parents with information on parent group organisation and meeting procedure; the rights and responsibilities of parents in preschools and schools; the regulations, policies and programs of the SA Department for Education and Child Development
- offers free information sessions to parents on *Reporting abuse and neglect* and *Principal/Director selection panels*



More information can be found at
www.saaspc.org.au



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SAASPC's Tips for parents

Parental engagement in student learning



What happens when parents are engaged in their children's learning

For children and young people

- improved outcomes in literacy - children who read to their parents, make significantly greater progress in reading than those who do not
- higher self esteem
- show an increased and positive interest in school learning and to school
- are better behaved
- earn higher grades and transition to their next class each year
- attend school regularly
- have better social skills
- less likely to undertake risky behaviours such as substance abuse
- go on to postsecondary education

For families

- parents want the best for their children. When they are engaged with the school, their children do better at school
- parents who are involved in their children's learning tend to show more sensitivity to their children's social, emotional and intellectual developmental needs
- engaged parents have more information about their children's education and can therefore make more informed decisions about what is best for their child

- parents own confidence and skills are increased
- parents are better able to help and encourage their children
- engaged parents tend to have a stronger belief that they can make a difference in their children's learning

For schools

- improved student achievement
- families bring skills which add to teachers' skills and expertise
- families bring different knowledge and perspectives about their children, their culture and their community
- improved communication to and from families
- improved community support
- Schools that engage with parents enjoy higher levels of trust and support from the community as well as among families
- improved student behaviour and improved student achievement which also leads to a better reputation in the community.
- parents can give help and advice on how to reach other parents which can in turn lead to improved community capacity
- there are also often spin offs in improved literacy and other skills for families
- all of these tend to feed into improved teacher morale

What can you do?

Have high expectations for your child

Let your child know that it is important that they do well in school. When parents consistently express belief in their child's potential and tell them that they expect them to succeed academically, they do better

Help your children develop positive attitudes

The greatest influence you can have on your child's chances of success in school lies in how you influence their attitudes, their sense of personal competence, and their work habits, including persistence, seeking help, and planning. Don't worry if you don't understand the work they are doing, rather, focus on helping them handle distractions and crises of confidence, praise them for effort and persistence and demonstrate a positive attitude about school as a whole

Read together (in any language)

Reading is one of the foundations of education, and you can make a big difference by reading and talking about books and stories with your child. Reading and storytelling help promote language, thinking, literacy and brain development

Develop a good relationship with the school

Get to know your child's teacher, make a time to talk together especially about any health problems or if your child is upset, if you are worried, or if there is bullying or teasing going on

Talk about school

Talk with your child about what's happening at school – activities, programs and what they are learning. This has a greater impact on academic achievement than monitoring homework, being at home after school, or limiting the time they are allowed to watch TV or go out during the week