



School Connections

A quarterly publication from the New York State Parental Information and Resource Centers

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When parents are involved, research shows that students have:

1. Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
2. Better school attendance
3. Increased motivation, better self-esteem
4. Lower rates of suspension
5. Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
6. Fewer instances of violent behavior

According to Feinstein & Symons (1999), **the single most powerful predictor of achievement at age 16 is parental interest in their child's education.**

Unfortunately, school activities to develop and maintain partnerships with families decline with each grade level, and drop dramatically at the transition to the middle grades. (Epstein, 1992)

What do students think about family engagement?

- Most students at middle and high school levels—want their families to be more knowledgeable partners about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting communications between home and school.

[Michigan Department of Education](http://www.michigan.gov/education)

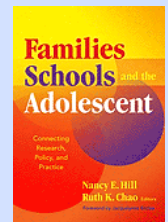
Check out the first episode in a series of podcasts on family engagement for middle and high school personnel:

<http://nyspirc.podbean.com/>

Professional Resource Review

Families, Schools and the Adolescent: Connecting Research, Policy, and Practice

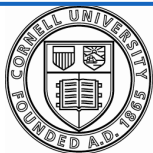
Author: Nancy E. Hill and Ruth K. Chao



Families and schools share a desire in helping improve student achievement, but sometimes struggle in how to help students during the transition to middle and high school. This book provides strategies for educators in helping parents to continue being involved during their child's teen years.

Family involvement in middle and high school may look very different from family involvement in elementary school, but it is still an essential component needed to support a student's academic success. This book shares various types of family involvement in middle and high school and explains ways educators can help motivate families to be engaged. When we prioritize communication about student progress and help families understand how they can help their student at home everyone wins.

This book also offers strategies that reflect academic socialization among various cultures and provides developmentally appropriate strategies across various ethnic and socio-economic groups. This book will help schools move forward in developing quality partnerships with all families in order to help improve student achievement.



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[Families and Communities Together with Schools](#) (FACTS), sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, provides services throughout Upstate New York.

[EPIC \(Every Person Influences Children\)](#) operates PIRC centers in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse Fallsburg/Monticello, Yonkers, Bronx, and Queens

Family Engagement In Middle and High School

Strategies used to engage families should vary depending on grade level of schooling and also take into account the developmental differences between young children and adolescents. There are also changes in the relationship between parents and students as teenagers enter high school and we must learn to adapt our programs to meet these changes. In this month's professional resource review, [Families, School and the Adolescent](#), Nancy Hill and Ruth Chao provide strategies and tips on ways your school can continue to create partnerships with families in middle and high school.

When parents of middle and high school students were asked what motivates them to be involved they reported it was a specific invitation from the teacher and also the teacher's responsiveness to the parents' wish for specific suggestions on ways to be involved to support the student's learning. We must be aware that family involvement with adolescents is most helpful when it is seen as non-intrusive and respectful of the student's developmental needs for increasing autonomy and independence.



It has been found that academic socialization has the highest impact on student achievement as it relates to family engagement. This means we must encourage families to include the following practices at home:

- Communicate expectations for education
- Link schoolwork to current events
- Foster education and occupational aspirations
- Discuss learning strategies with students
- Make plans and prepare for the future

As Educators, we must also make transparent the strong link between high school experiences and post secondary education and/or the workforce. We can work together with families by helping students understand the importance of the following:

- Academic engagement– understanding the importance of being an active learner
- Self-regulation– planning, goal setting, self-monitoring their own work
- Academic self-efficacy– self belief in their own academic competence
- Social self-efficacy– belief that seeking help from teachers will support learning
- Time management– ability to complete homework while being involved in extra-curricular activities
- Strong work ethic– going to school everyday and showing up to class on time

Parents are the adolescents' strongest supporter so it is imperative for schools to identify ways to involve families in order for the adolescent to reach their full potential. We must help families understand that we need to work together to help their teens engage in school, achieve academically and develop into independent lifelong learners. Building the capacity for family engagement in our schools is not about programs, checklists and activities, but is related to the attitudes and beliefs we have about our roles and the importance of involving **all** families in the education of the students.

To learn more about connecting research, policy and practice of family engagement in middle and high school order your own copy of [Families, Schools and the Adolescent](#).

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