



# Can families really help students learn?

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RON MIRR

# Definition

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**Family Engagement** is any way that a child's adult caretaker (biological parents, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) at home, at school and in the community, effectively support learning and healthy development.

SEDL – Advancing Research, Improving Education

# A New Wave of Evidence

The Impact of School, Family, and Community  
Connections on Student Achievement

Annual Synthesis 2002



2002

## A New Wave of Evidence—In Short

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. This fourth edition of *Evidence* confirms that the research continues to grow and build an ever-strengthening case. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

Beyond the  
**BAKE  
SALE**

The Essential Guide to  
Family-School Partnerships



Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp,  
Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies

"Hundreds of good ideas, reviews, and resources for educators, parents, and policy leaders."  
—Joyce L. Epstein, Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships,  
Johns Hopkins University

2006



### **What can parents do to help their children succeed in school?**

- Fifteen-year-old students whose parents often read books with them during their first year of primary school show markedly higher scores in PISA 2009 than students whose parents read with them infrequently or not at all.
- The performance advantage among students whose parents read to them in their early school years is evident regardless of the family's socio-economic background.
- Parents' engagement with their 15-year-olds is strongly associated with better performance in PISA.

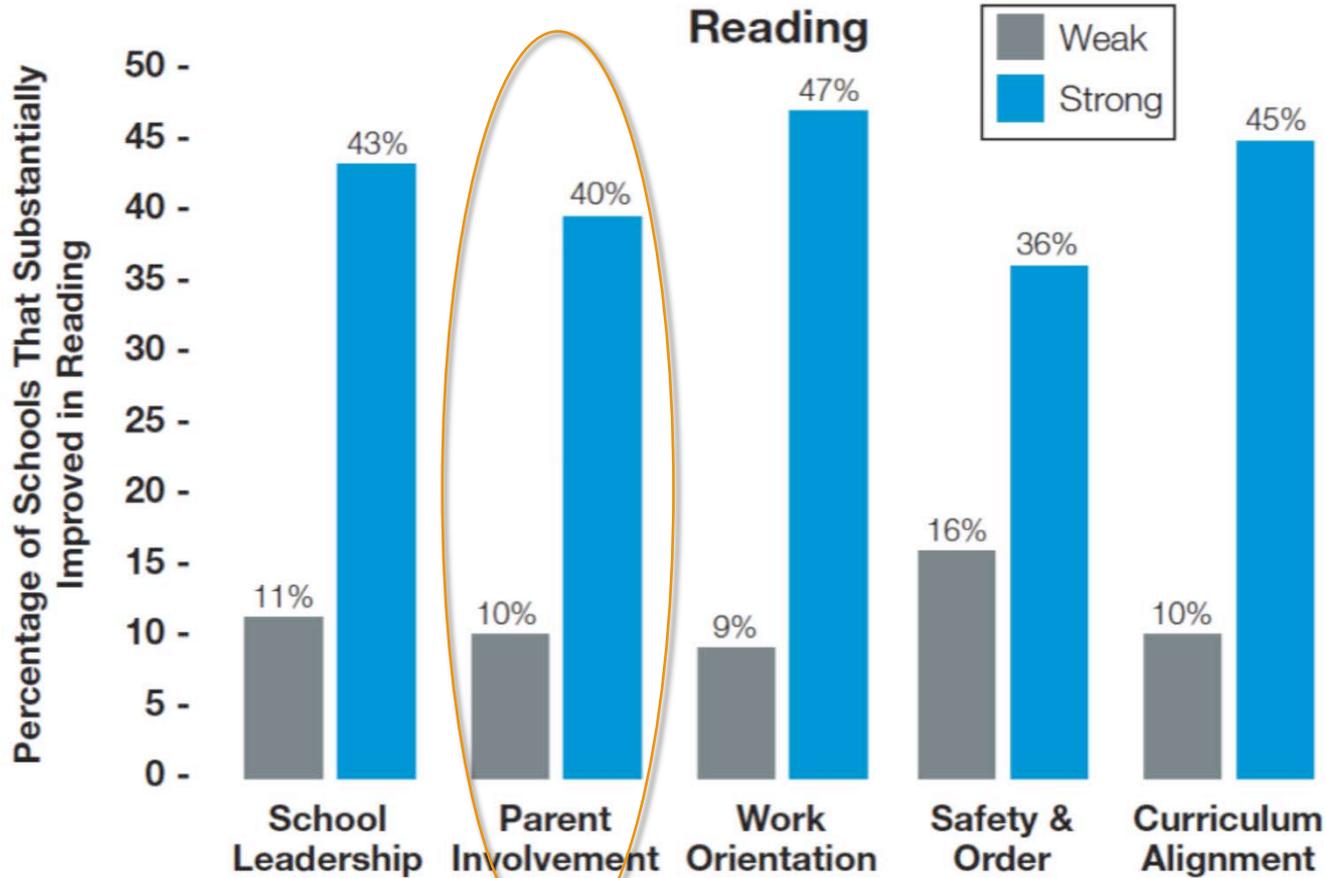
Most parents know, instinctively, that spending more time with their children

# 2009

The bottom line: All parents can help their children achieve their full potential by spending some time talking and reading with their children – even, perhaps especially, when their children are very young. Teachers, schools and education systems should explore how they can help busy parents play a more active role in their children's education, both in and out of school.

FIG 2.

## Likelihood of Substantial Improvement, Given Weak or Strong Supports





## The Family Engagement Partnership

Student Outcome Evaluation



By Steven B. Sheldon & Sol Bee Jung

# 2015

## Student Outcomes

Students whose families received home visits were more likely to attend school and to achieve or exceed grade-level reading comprehension than students whose families did not receive a home visit, even after controlling for prior differences in attendance and reading comprehension.

# What's coming...

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Karen Mapp's Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

- Late Spring or Summer 2016

# Students with Engaged Families...

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Exhibit faster rates of **literacy** acquisition

Earn **higher grades** and test scores

Enroll in **higher level** programs

Are promoted more and earn **more credits**

Adapt better to school and **attend** more regularly

Have **better social skills** and behavior

**Graduate** and go on to higher education

# Engaged families...

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Know what their child should **know and be able to do** at the end of year.

Know **how well** their child is doing.

Know what they can **do at home** to support what their child is learning in the classroom.

Take **action**.

# Engaging schools...

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**Welcome** families into the school and the learning process.

**Communicate** using multiple methods that encourage two-way communication.

**Inform** families about learning.

**Empower** families to support their child's learning and **ensure** they take action at home.



Where do you start?

With your own Core Beliefs

# Core Belief

# 1

All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

## Core Belief

# 2

All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.

## Core Belief

# 3

Families and school/program staff should be equal partners.

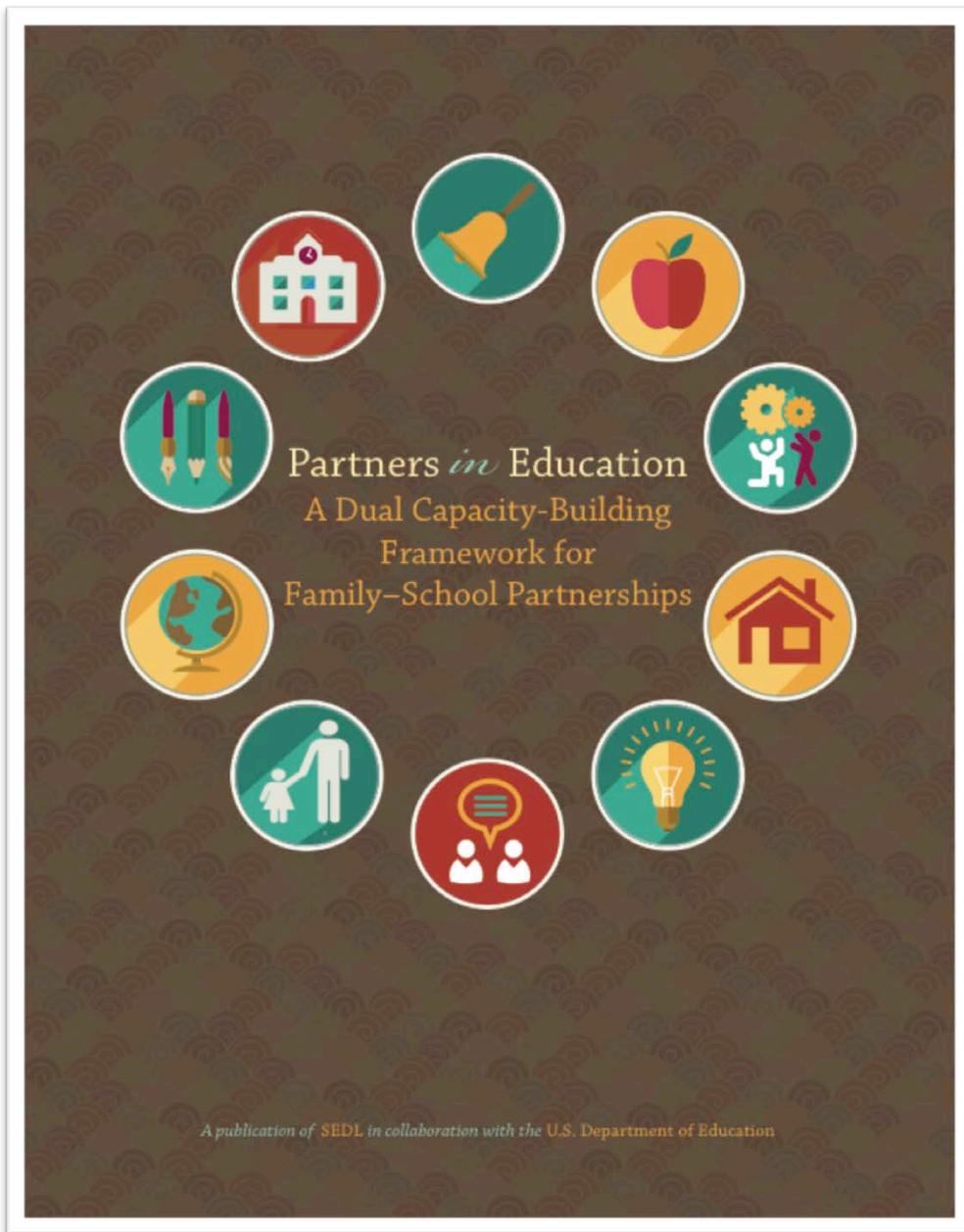
## Core Belief

# 4

The responsibility for building and sustaining partnerships between school, home, and community rests **primarily with school/program staff**, especially school/program leaders.

Why has it been difficult to cultivate and sustain effective family-school partnerships that support student achievement and school improvement?

The various stakeholders (families, district/school leaders and staff) have not had the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions, in other words, the **capacity** to engage in effective partnerships



2013

# THE CHALLENGE

Lack of opportunities for **School/Program Staff** to build the capacity for partnerships

## Ineffective Family-School Partnerships

Lack of opportunities for **Families** to build the capacity for partnerships

- Collaborative
- Interactive

- Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

### POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS

To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the "4 C" areas:

- Capabilities (skills and knowledge)
- Connections (networks)
- Cognition (beliefs, values)
- Confidence (self-efficacy)

### FAMILY AND STAFF CAPACITY OUTCOMES

School and Program Staff who can

- Honor and recognize families' funds of knowledge
- Connect family engagement to student learning
- Create welcoming, inviting cultures

Families who can negotiate multiple roles

- Supporters
- Encouragers
- Monitors
- Advocates
- Decision Makers
- Collaborators

**Effective Family-School Partnerships**  
Supporting Student Achievement & School Improvement

## THE CHALLENGE

Lack of opportunities for School/ Program Staff to build the capacity for partnerships

### Ineffective Family-School Partnerships

Lack of opportunities for Families to build the capacity for partnerships

# OPPORTUNITY CONDITIONS

## Process Conditions

- Linked to learning
- Relational
- Development vs. service orientation
- Collaborative
- Interactive

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