



Quick Guide: Parent and Family Involvement in K-12 Service-Learning

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For additional resources on these and other service-learning topics visit the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse Website at www.servicelarning.org

Service-learning programs can offer parents and families the opportunity to participate in innovative learning experiences, and to become engaged in their children's schools in unique ways.

Research has demonstrated that strong family involvement has numerous benefits for children and youth, including:

- Higher grades and test scores;
- Better school attendance;
- Greater completion of homework;
- Demonstration of more positive attitudes and behavior; and
- Higher graduation rates (Carter, 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001).

In addition, parents who are involved in their children's education show that they value learning and good character, set high expectations, stay informed about their children's progress, and monitor their children's activities. Research shows that when parents maintain strong relationships with their children's schools, the parents develop:

- A greater appreciation of their role in their children's education;
- An improved sense of self worth;
- Stronger social networks; and
- A greater understanding about their schools and teaching and learning activities in general (Carter, 2003; Mapp, 2003).

Service-learning programs can benefit parents by providing them with unique ways of communicating with and understanding their children while also developing their skills as leaders and advocates in their schools and communities (National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, n.d.). In some cases, parents may even be the recipients of service-learning program activities (computer training, literacy instruction, etc.).

Parents also can be a valuable resource for service-learning programs. Tasks they can perform include providing transportation to service sites, helping with fundraising or public relations, planning the program, connecting schools with service sites in the community, and serving as mentors to youth involved in service programs (Kraft, 1998). They can also be volunteer service-learning coordinators.

The following resources may be helpful to those designing parent involvement approaches for their K-12 service-learning programs.

Web Resources

Institute for Responsive Education

<http://www.responsiveeducation.org>

Provides resources on partnerships among schools, families, and communities to enable high quality educational opportunities for all children. The Web site offers a variety of resources, including the publication, "Supporting Parents as Leaders: Stories of Dedication, Determination, and Inspiration."

National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

<http://sedl.org/connections>

Disseminates the latest research on family and community connections with schools designed to raise student achievement. Available Web resources include annual research syntheses on school, family and community involvement, and "The Connection Collection: School, Family, Community Publications", which is a database of annotations for more than 140 articles, monographs, and other literature related to school, family, and community involvement in education.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

<http://www/ncpie.org>

Advocates for the involvement of parents and families in their children's education and promotes relationships between home, school, and community to enhance the education of young people. Web site resources include information on developing partnerships and an extensive list of parent and family involvement organizations.

National Network of Partnership Schools: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm>

Conducts and disseminates research to promote new and useful knowledge and practices that help families, educators, and members of the communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development. Available

Web site resources include publications on parent involvement, school-family-community partnerships, student achievement, and best practices.

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/parents>

Provides information to educators, policymakers, teachers, and parents on the various provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Publications include “No Child Left Behind: A Parents Guide”, and “Helping Your Child Succeed in School”.

Print Resources

Carter, Suzanne. *The Impact of Parent/Family Involvement on Student Outcomes: An Annotated Bibliography of Research from the Past Decade*. Eugene, OR: Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE), 2003.

http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/parent_family_involv.cfm

Henderson, Anne T., and Karen L. Mapp. *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002.

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

Jordan, Catherine, Evangelina Orozco, and Amy Averett. *Emerging Issues in School, Family, and Community Connections*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001. <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/emergingissues.pdf>

Kraft, Nancy P. *Building Collaborations to Support Service-Learning*. In *Building Support for Service-Learning*, edited by Shelley H. Billig, 67-88. Denver, CO: RMC Research Corporation, 1998.

Mapp, Karen L. “Having Their Say: Parents Describe Why and How They are Engaged in Their Children’s Learning.” *The School-Community Journal* 13 (2003): 35-64.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. *A Framework for Family Involvement*. Fairfax, VA: Author, n.d. <http://www.ncpie.org/DevelopingPartnerships>