

# Parental Involvement in Schools

INDICATORS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH



The percentage of students whose parents reported involvement in their schools rose significantly between 1999 and 2007 across several measures, including attendance at a general meeting, a meeting with a teacher, or a school event, and volunteering or serving on a committee. However, these proportions fell or remained the same in 2012.

## Importance

Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance, and are more likely to complete high school than students whose parents are not involved in their school.<sup>1</sup> Positive effects of parental involvement have been demonstrated at both the elementary and secondary levels across several studies, with the largest effects often occurring at the elementary level.<sup>2,3,4</sup> A recent meta-analysis showed that parental involvement in school life was more strongly associated with high academic performance for middle schoolers than helping with homework.<sup>5</sup>

Involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities, and to coordinate their efforts with teachers to encourage acceptable classroom behavior and ensure that the child completes schoolwork.<sup>6</sup> Teachers of students with highly involved parents tend to give greater attention to those students, and they are more likely to identify at earlier stages problems that might inhibit student learning.<sup>7</sup> Parental involvement in school, and positive parent-teacher interactions, have also been found to positively affect teachers' self-perception and job satisfaction.<sup>8</sup>

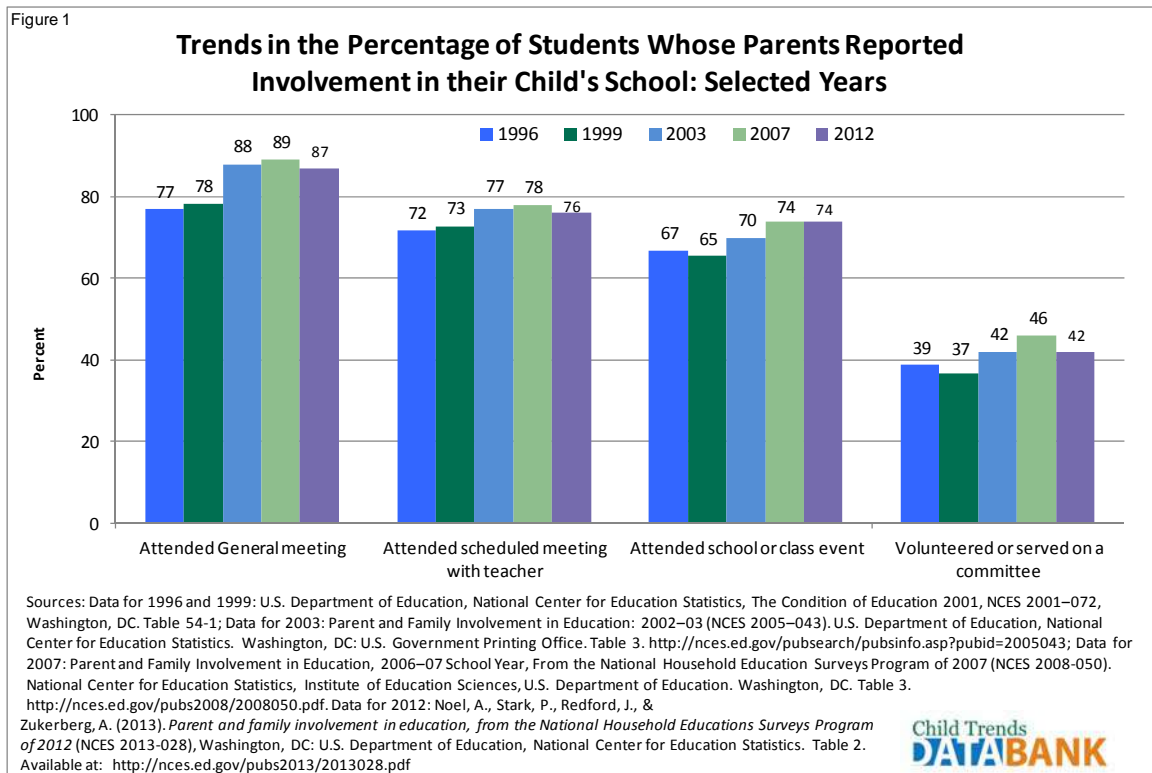
Research shows that students perform better in school if their fathers as well as their mothers are involved, regardless of whether the father lives with the student or not.<sup>9,10</sup>



## Trends

Parental involvement in school, as measured by attendance at a general meeting, a meeting with a teacher, or a school event, or by volunteering or serving on a committee, rose significantly between 1999 and 2007, but fell on most measures in 2012. In 2007, 89 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade had parents who attended a general meeting, compared with 78 percent in 1999. In 2012, 87 percent had parents who attended a general meeting. In 2007, 78 percent had a parent who attended a scheduled meeting with a teacher, 74 percent had a parent who attended a school event, and 46 percent had a parent who volunteered in school or served on a committee, compared with 73, 65, and 37 percent, respectively, in 1999. In 2012, the proportion who attended a scheduled meeting had fallen to 76 percent, and the proportion who volunteered or served on a committee had fallen to 42 percent. (Figure 1)

Figure 1





## Differences by Grade

Parents are most likely to attend school meetings and events or to volunteer in their child's school when their children are in primary school. In 2012, more than 90 percent of students in kindergarten through fifth grade had a parent who attended a meeting with their teachers, compared with 87 percent of middle-school students, and 79 percent of ninth- through twelfth-grade students. In the same year, 89 percent, each, of students in kindergarten through second grade, and students in third through fifth grade, had a parent who attended a scheduled meeting with a teacher, compared with 71 percent of students in middle school and 57 percent of students in high school. Among students in kindergarten through second grade, 56 percent had parents who volunteered or served on a committee, compared with 51 percent of students in third through fifth grade, 32 percent of students in sixth through eighth grade, and 28 percent of students in ninth through twelfth grade. Attendance at school or class events, however, peaked with older elementary school students. (Appendix 2)

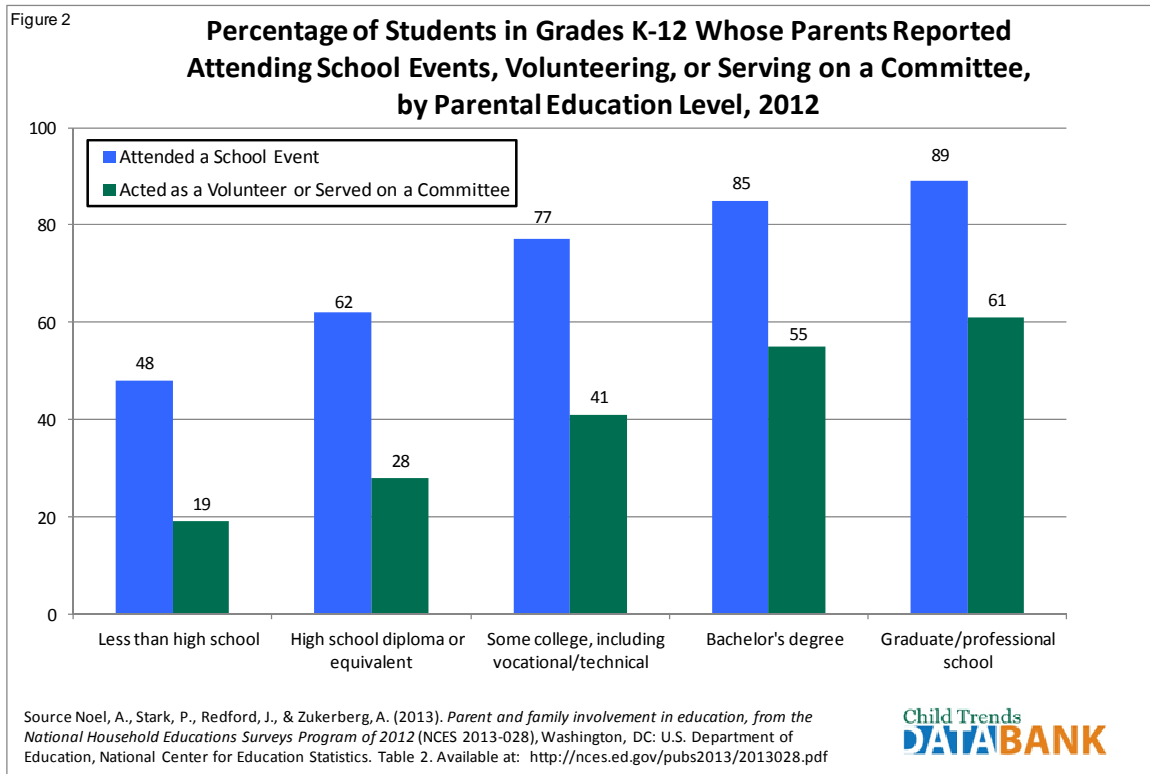
## Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin<sup>11</sup>

Hispanic and black students were less likely than white students to have parents who attended general meetings or school events, or who volunteered their time. In 2012, 85 percent of black, and 86 percent of Hispanic students had parents who attended a general meeting, compared with 89 percent of white students. Sixty-eight percent of black, and 64 percent of Hispanic students had a parent who attended school events, while 82 percent of white students had a parent who had done so. Thirty-two percent of Hispanic students and 31 percent of black students had a parent who volunteered their time, compared with 50 percent of white students. (Appendix 1)



## Differences by Parental Educational Attainment

Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved in their children's schools. For example, in 2012, more than 85 percent of students whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher had a parent who attended a school event, compared with 48 percent for students whose parents had less than a high school education. This gap is even wider when it comes to volunteering: 19 percent of students with no parent who had graduated high school had a parent volunteer or serve on a committee, compared with 61 percent of students who had at least one parent who had completed graduate or professional school. (Figure 2)



## Differences by Poverty Level

Parents of students living in a household with income above the poverty level are more likely to be involved in school activities than parents of children living in a household at or below the poverty line. In 2011-12, for example, 45 percent of children living above the poverty line had a parent who volunteered or served on a committee at their child's school, compared with 27



percent of children living at or below the poverty line. Parents of students living above the poverty line were more likely to be involved than parents of student living at or below the poverty line on all measures of involvement. (Appendix 2)

## Differences by Parents' Language

Parents who do not speak English at home (parents who did not learn English as a child and currently speak a non-English language in the home) are less likely than other parents to attend a general school meeting or school event, or to volunteer or serve on a committee. For example, in 2012, 50 percent of children with parents who did not speak English had a parent who attended a school event, compared with 62 percent of students with one parent who did not speak English, and 78 percent of students whose parents both spoke English. (Appendix 2)

## State and Local Estimates

None available.

## International Estimates

None available.

## National Goals

The *No Child Left Behind* legislation, signed into law January 2002, aims for all children to achieve academic proficiency and gain the educational skills necessary to succeed later in life. The law mandates that parents be informed on how they can be involved in school improvement efforts, and be provided with report cards on schools in their district, to help guide their involvement. Schools and education agencies are required to disseminate literature on effective parent involvement, and schools receiving Title I funding must have written policies, annual meetings, and training on parental involvement, and re-evaluate and revise their strategies when needed.

For more information on the requirements see "No Child Left Behind: A Parent's Guide" at <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.pdf>



## What Works to Make Progress on This Indicator

Increasing parental involvement in school can be challenging, particularly when the families concerned are economically disadvantaged, or do not have English as their primary language. Low-income parents' involvement in school may be hindered by transportation difficulties, chronic health conditions, or conflicts with work schedules, while parents whose primary language is not English may not feel able to participate in school activities, or may belong to a culture where questioning teachers is not a norm.<sup>12</sup>

Schools have employed several strategies to increase parental involvement in school, ranging from extensive promotion of events such as "back to school" nights, to school-based cultural events in areas with large immigrant populations. Large-scale initiatives, such as the community schools movement, are also designed to increase disadvantaged families' involvement in school by making the school a hub of social services for the neighborhood. However, few studies have rigorously evaluated the effects of such programs on parental involvement. A recent report from the Center for American Progress provides suggestive evidence from studies of several successful community schools that these types of schools positively impact parental involvement.<sup>13</sup>

## Related Indicators

- Parental Expectations for Children's Academic Achievement: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=parental-expectations-for-their-childrens-academic-attainment](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=parental-expectations-for-their-childrens-academic-attainment)
- School Communication in Parents' Native Language: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=school-communication-in-parents-native-language](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=school-communication-in-parents-native-language)
- Reading to Young Children: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=reading-to-young-children](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=reading-to-young-children)

## Definition

Parental involvement in school is defined as parent reported participation at least once during the school year in attending a general school meeting; attending a scheduled meeting with their child's teacher; attending a school event; or volunteering in the school or serving on a school committee.



## Data Sources

- Data for 2012: Noel, A., Stark, P., Redford, J., & Zukerberg, A. (2013). *Parent and family involvement in education, from the National Household Educational Surveys Program of 2012* (NCES 2013-028), Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Table 2. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013028.pdf>
- Data for 2007: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2008). *Parent and Family Involvement in Education, 2006–07 School Year* (NCES 2008-050), Washington, DC. Table 3. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008050.pdf>
- Data for 2003: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office: Table 3. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>
- Data for 1996 and 1999: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *The Condition of Education 2001* (NCES 2001–072), Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office: Table 54-1. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001072>

## Raw Data Source

National Household Education Surveys (NHES): Parent and Family Involvement in Education

<http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/>





## Appendix 1 - Percentage of Students in Grades K-12 Whose Parents Reported Involvement in Their Child's School, by Type of Involvement and Selected Characteristics, Selected Years, 1996-2012<sup>1</sup>

	Attended General Meeting					Attended scheduled meeting with teacher				
	1996	1999	2003	2007	2012	1996	1999	2003	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	77	78	88	89	87	72	73	77	78	76
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>										
White, non-Hispanic	79	81	89	91	89	73	74	76	78	77
Black, non-Hispanic	72	75	89	87	85	69	71	79	77	76
Hispanic	74	73	83	87	86	72	71	78	80	73
Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	-	-	89	90	84	-	-	78	80	72
Other, non-Hispanic <sup>2</sup>	73	77	87	90	88	72	73	78	74	78
<b>Parents' highest education level</b>										
Less than high school	58	57	70	75	77	63	60	68	70	64
High school diploma or equivalent	72	73	84	84	82	69	70	75	74	72
Vocational/technical or some college	78	79	89	89	88	73	74	78	77	77
Bachelor's degree	87	87	93	94	92	77	80	80	81	80
Graduate/professional school	89	89	93	95	95	76	76	79	82	82



	Attended school or class event					Volunteered or served on a committee				
	1996	1999	2003	2007	2012	1996	1999	2003	2007	2012
<b>Total</b>	67	65	70	74	74	39	37	42	46	42
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>										
White, non-Hispanic	72	72	74	80	82	44	43	48	54	50
Black, non-Hispanic	56	54	63	65	68	27	26	32	35	31
Hispanic	55	51	61	65	64	26	25	28	32	32
Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	-	-	65	72	65	-	-	34	46	37
Other, non-Hispanic <sup>2</sup>	64	62	72	76	76	35	31	40	47	44
<b>Parents' highest education level</b>										
Less than high school	42	38	42	48	48	17	13	16	20	19
High school diploma or equivalent	60	59	62	65	62	30	26	30	33	28
Vocational/technical or some college	69	67	70	72	77	39	37	39	42	41
Bachelor's degree	76	76	80	83	85	52	50	55	56	55
Graduate/professional school	82	79	80	87	89	57	54	60	64	61

<sup>1</sup>Estimates from 2003, 2007, and 2012 are from questions asked to parents about the 2002-2003, 2006-2007, and 2011-2012 school years.

<sup>2</sup>Includes Asian and Pacific Islanders in 1996 and 1999.

Note: Since the focus of this report is on how students' parents interact with schools, homeschoolers are excluded from all of the analyses.



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Sources: Data for 1996 and 1999: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2001*, NCES 2001–072, Washington, DC. Table 54-1; Data for 2003: *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002–03* (NCES 2005–043). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 3. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>; Data for 2007: *Parent and Family Involvement in Education, 2006–07 School Year*, From the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007 (NCES 2008-050). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. Table 3. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008050.pdf>. Data for 2012: Noel, A., Stark, P., Redford, J., & Zukerberg, A. (2013). *Parent and family involvement in education, from the National Household Educations Surveys Program of 2012* (NCES 2013-028), Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Table 2. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013028.pdf>



## Appendix 2 - Percentage of Students in Grades K-12 Whose Parents Reported Involvement in Their Child's School, by Type of Involvement and Selected Characteristics, 2012<sup>1</sup>

	Attended General Meeting	Attended scheduled meeting with teacher	Attended school or class event	Volunteered or served on a committee
<b>Total</b>	87	76	74	42
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	89	77	82	50
Black, non-Hispanic	85	76	68	31
Hispanic	86	73	64	32
Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	84	72	65	37
Other, non-Hispanic	88	78	76	44
<b>Grade</b>				
K - 2nd grade	93	89	79	56
3rd - 5th grade	92	89	82	51
6th -8th grade	87	71	70	32
9th - 12th grade	79	57	66	28
<b>Household Poverty Status</b>				
Above poverty level	89	77	78	45
At or below poverty level	82	71	60	27



	Attended General Meeting	Attended scheduled meeting with teacher	Attended school or class event	Volunteered or served on a committee
<b>Parents' highest education level</b>				
Less than high school	77	64	48	19
High school diploma or equivalent	82	72	62	28
Vocational/technical or some college	88	77	77	41
Bachelor's degree	92	80	85	55
Graduate/professional school	95	82	89	61
<b>Parents' language</b>				
Both/only parent(s) speak(s) English	88	77	78	45
One of two parents speaks English	88	69	62	29
No parent speaks English	82	65	50	23

<sup>1</sup>Estimates from 2012 are from questions asked to parents about the 2011-2012 school year.

Note: Since the focus of this report is on how students' parents interact with schools, homeschoolers are excluded from all of the analyses.

Source: Noel, A., Stark, P., Redford, J., & Zukerberg, A. (2013). *Parent and family involvement in education, from the National Household Educations Surveys Program of 2012* (NCES 2013-028), Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Table 2. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013028.pdf>



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Henderson, A. T., and Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

<sup>2</sup>Jeynes, W. H. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 40(3), 237-269.

<sup>3</sup>Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 82-110.

<sup>4</sup>Stewart, E. B. (2008). School structural characteristics, student effort, peer associations, and parental involvement: The influence of school- and individual-level factors on academic achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(2), 179-204.

<sup>5</sup>Hill, N. E. & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: a meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(3), 740-763.

<sup>6</sup>Hill, N., and Taylor, L. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(4) 161-164.

<sup>7</sup>Zill, N., and Nord, C. W. (1994). *Running in place: How American families are faring in a changing economy and individualistic society*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>8</sup>Tschannen-Moran, M. and Hoy, A. W. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(6), 944-956.

<sup>9</sup>Nord, C. W., Brimhall, D., and West, J. (1998). *Fathers' involvement in their children's schools*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/fathers/>

<sup>10</sup>Nord, C. W. and West, J. (2001). *Fathers' and mothers' involvement in their children's schools by family type and resident status*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001032.pdf>

<sup>11</sup>Hispanics may be of any race. Blacks, whites, and Asian or Pacific Islanders do not include Hispanics in this report.

<sup>12</sup>Tinkler, B. (2002, March, 25). *A review of literature on Hispanic/Latino parent involvement in K-12 education*. Retrieved from ERIC database (D469134). Retrieved from: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED469134.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>Bireda, S. (October, 2009). *A look at community schools*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.