Involving Parents
In Middle School Literacy
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Importance of Parents
Parents Influence Achievement

ISAT 2007 and 2008

Average Score

Grade 5
Grade 6

ISAT 2008 and 2009

Average Score
Parent Involvement during middle school has a considerable impact on how important students think school (and learning) is.
• “Cultural” communication (discussing books, films, television programs, & political/social issues) and cultural activities (attending museums, concerts and live theatre) had positive effects on literacy performance in many countries.
• Young adolescents must actually engage with their parents and such cultural resources to benefit learning.
Reading outside of school has profound impact on literacy development. Parents provide and guide reading material and time.
Parents are the most likely companions when middle school students read outside of school. They have a positive influence on young adolescents feelings about reading.
Principles in Engaging Parents
Two way Communication

Parents as experts on their own children. Some don’t know how to help or have academic “capital”

Teachers as experts on curriculum, learning and development

How can you tap parent expertise?

How can you share information?
Two way Communication

Messages:

1. We are interested in listening to you.
2. We are dedicated to your child’s learning.
3. We know some things of value for your child.

Lareau’s concept of 5 messages: Pick two
Be positive and optimistic!
Teaching is a Professional Role
Parenting is not.

- Invitations from teachers are THE most influential factor in how much parents become involved in a given class.

- Invitations and expectations from their children are very powerful.

- Almost all parents are *deeply* emotionally involved.
Tie Family Engagement to Learning

Every family has people with knowledge and skills. Students will benefit if teachers connect subject matter to that.

Look at curriculum,
Ask parents:
Do you, family, or friends have or use knowledge about this in career or hobbies?

• Have you lived, traveled or been at any places or events related to …?
• Do you have any skills in …?
Tie Engagement to Learning

Book Club: literary value of young adult literature.

Parents and communities as texts (see links on handout).

Parents as audience. Including for 21st century literacies!